

U.S., Iran step back from the brink; region still on edge

By ZEKE MILLER

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. and Iran stepped back from the brink of possible war on Wednesday as President Donald Trump signaled he would not retaliate militarily for Iran's missile strikes on Iraqi bases housing U.S. troops. No one was harmed in the strikes, but U.S. forces in the region remained on high alert. Speaking from the White House, Trump seemed intent on deescalating the crisis, which spiraled after he authorized the targeted killing last week of Iran's top general, Qassem Soleimani. Iran responded overnight with its most direct assault on America since the 1979 seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, firing more than a dozen missiles at two installations in Iraq. The Pentagon said Wednesday that it believed Iran fired with the intent to kill.

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President Donald Trump addresses the nation from the White House on the ballistic missile strike that Iran launched against Iraqi air bases housing U.S. troops, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020, in Washington, as Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and military leaders, looks on.

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Even so, Trump's takeaway was that "Iran appears to be standing down, which is a good thing for all parties concerned and a very good thing for the world." Despite such conciliatory talk, the region remained on edge, and American troops including a quick-reaction force dispatched over the weekend, were on high alert. Last week Iranian-backed militia besieged the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, and Tehran's proxies in the region remain able to carry out attacks such as the one on Dec. 27 that killed a U.S. contractor and set off the most recent round of hostilities. Hours after Trump spoke, an 'incoming' siren went off in Baghdad's Green Zone after what seemed to be small rockets "impacted" the diplomatic area, a Western official said. There were no reports of casualties. There is no obvious path to diplomatic engagement, as Trump pledged to add to his "maximum pressure" campaign of economic sanctions. He said the new, unspecified sanctions would remain in place "until Iran changes its behavior."

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the overnight strike was not necessarily the totality of Iran's response.

"Last night they received a slap," Khamenei said. "These military actions are not sufficient (for revenge). What is important is that the corrupt presence of America in this region comes to an end."

Trump, facing perhaps the biggest test of his presidency, credited the minimized damage to an early warning system "that worked very well" and said Americans should be "extremely grateful and happy" with the outcome.

The strikes had pushed Tehran and Washington perilously close to all-out conflict and left the world waiting to see whether the American president would respond with more military force. Trump, in his nine-minute, televised address, spoke of a robust U.S. military with missiles that are "big, powerful, accurate, lethal and fast." But then he added: "We do not want to use it." Iran for days had been promising to respond forcefully to Soleimani's killing, but its limited strike on two bases — one in the



Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee, joined at right by Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., responds to reporters following a briefing by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Defense Secretary Mark Esper, and other national security officials on the details of the threat that prompted the U.S. to kill Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani in Iraq, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020 on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

northern Iraqi city in Irbil and the other at Ain al-Asad in western Iraq — appeared to signal that it, too, was uninterested in a wider clash with the U.S. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted that the country had "concluded proportionate measures in self-defense."

Trump, who is facing reelection in November, campaigned for president on a promise to extract the United States from "endless wars."

On Wednesday, he said the United States was "ready to embrace peace with all who seek it." That marked a sharp change in tone from his warning a day earlier that "if Iran does anything that they shouldn't be doing, they're going to be suffering the consequences, and very strongly."

Members of Congress were briefed on the Iran situation Wednesday afternoon in closed-door sessions on Capitol Hill, where Democrats and some Republicans expressed dissatisfaction with the administration's justifications for the drone strike on Soleimani.

Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah said it was "probably the worst briefing I've seen, at least on a military issue, in the nine years I've served in the United States Senate." He said it was "distressing" that officials suggested it would only embolden Iran if lawmakers debated the merits of further military action. He and Sen. Rand Paul announced their support of a largely symbolic war powers resolution to limit Trump's military action regarding Iran. Democratic Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced after the briefing that the House would vote Thursday on a war powers resolution of its own.

Trump opened his remarks at the White House by reiterating his promise that "Iran will never be allowed to have a nuclear weapon." Iran had announced in the wake of Soleimani's

killing that it would no longer comply with any of the limits on uranium enrichment in the 2015 nuclear deal crafted to keep it from building a nuclear device. The president, who had earlier pulled the U.S. out of the deal, seized on the moment of calm to call for negotiations toward a new agreement that would do more to limit Iran's ballistic missile programs and constrain regional proxy campaigns like those led by Soleimani.

Trump also announced he would ask NATO to become "much more involved in the Middle East process." While he has frequently criticized NATO as obsolete and has encouraged participants to increase their military spending, Trump has tried to push the military alliance to refocus its efforts on modern threats.

Like the U.S. troops in the region, NATO forces have temporarily halted their training of Iraqi forces and their work to combat the Islamic State.

Soleimani's death last week in an American drone strike in Baghdad prompted angry calls for vengeance and drew massive crowds of Iranians to the streets to mourn him. Khamenei himself wept at the funeral in a sign of his bond with the commander.

The Iranians fired a total of 15 missiles in the latest strikes, U.S. officials said. Ten hit the Ain al-Asad air base in Iraq's western Anbar province and one targeted a base in Irbil in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region. Four failed, said the officials, who spoke only on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about a military operation. Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters Wednesday that the Pentagon believes that Iran fired the missiles with the intent "to kill personnel." He praised early warning systems, which detected the incoming ballistic missiles well in advance, providing U.S. and coalition forces adequate time to take shelter at both bases. Officials also said that the U.S. was aware of preparations for the attack. □

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Carnival insists progress in curbing cruise ship pollution

MIAMI (AP) — Top Carnival Corp. executives told a skeptical federal judge Wednesday that progress is being made to curb the world's largest cruise line's chronic ocean pollution problems.

At one point in a hearing, Senior U.S. District Judge Patricia Seitz asked Carnival Chairman Micky Arison directly whether he'd taken any steps personally to improve the environmental compliance of the ships.

"We're totally committed," said Arison, who also owns the NBA's Miami Heat. "How

much more can we be saying as a management team that we're totally committed? I don't know how much more we could do."

Carnival is halfway through five years' probation for violating environmental laws stemming from a 2016 criminal case, paying a \$40 million fine. The Miami-based cruise line admitted last year that its ships had continued to pollute the oceans, a probation violation which triggered an additional \$20 million fine.

Among the most pressing

environmental problems are dumping "gray water" into sensitive waterways, discharge of plastic along with food waste into the water and changing a corporate culture that did not previously place enough emphasis on compliance with environmental laws.

The company, which has more than 100 ships across nine brands and more than 120,000 employees, insists it is making progress on all fronts. In one recent court filing, Carnival said it intends to cut single-use plastics in half by 2021, is test-

ing food waste "digesters" intended to prevent non-food from getting mixed in and is increasing spending on ethics and compliance by more than \$18 million this year.

"What changed is going from a high priority to the high priority," Carnival CEO Arnold Donald told the judge. "We're not saying we're done. We're not satisfied. We know we have work to do."

Seitz said that, for the next hearing set for April, there should be better ways to specifically measure any


improvements Carnival is making toward environmental compliance.



"I'm going to accept for now that you are committed to the long term," the judge said. "I don't think this company wants to move this slowly."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Udell said independent audits show "a lot of problems on a lot of ships." But he also said Carnival deserves credit for the steps it has taken so far. "There is positive movement. We're still saying Carnival is not there," Udell said. □

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Fears of Sanders win growing among Democratic establishment

By **STEVE PEOPLES** and **AL-EXANDRA JAFFE**

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Increasingly alarmed that Bernie Sanders could become their party's presidential nominee, establishment-minded Democrats are warning primary voters that the self-described democratic socialist would struggle to defeat President Donald Trump and hurt the party's chances in premier House, Senate and governors' races.

The urgent warnings come as Sanders shows new signs of strength on the ground in the first two states on the presidential primary calendar, Iowa and New Hampshire, backed by a dominant fundraising operation. The Vermont senator has largely escaped close scrutiny over the last year as his rivals doubted the quirky 78-year-old's ability to win the nomination. But less than a month before Iowa's kickoff caucuses, the doubters are being forced to take Sanders seriously. Former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, previously a senior aide to President Barack Obama, warned Democrats that Sanders' status as a democratic socialist and his unwavering support for "Medicare for All" won't play well among swing voters in the states that matter most in 2020.

"You need a candidate with a message that can help us win swing voters in battleground states," Emanuel said in an interview. "The degree of difficulty dramatically increases under a Bernie Sanders candidacy. It just gets a lot harder."

The increasingly vocal concerns are coming from a number of political veterans tied to the Obama administration and the



In this Dec. 13, 2019, file photo, Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., speaks at a campaign event in Manchester, N.H.

Associated Press

2020 field's moderate wing, including those backing former Vice President Joe Biden, former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg and Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet.

In some ways, the criticism is not surprising. Sanders has spent decades fighting to transform the nation's political and economic systems, creating a long list of political adversaries along the way. Many people connected to Hillary Clinton, for example, still blame Sanders for not working hard enough to support her after their long and bitter presidential primary feud in 2016. Some Democrats still accuse him of not being enough of a team player.

Sanders' chief strategist Jeff Weaver dismissed the growing criticism as a reflection of the strength of his candidacy.

He raised more money than any other Democratic candidate in the last quarter — virtually all of it from small-dollar donors — and he's considered a legitimate contender to win Iowa and New Hampshire next month.

"People in establishment Washington are terrified of Bernie Sanders," Weaver said. "The truth of the matter is their centrist tacking over the years has led us to the place where someone like Donald Trump can get elected."

Less than four weeks before Iowa's Feb. 3 caucuses, Sanders' critics are making a concerted effort to turn up the volume.

The ranks of the concerned include many Democrats tasked with preserving the party's majority in the House and expanding its minority in the Senate and governors' mansions across the country.

California Rep. Ami Bera, a leader in the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee's "frontline" program to protect vulnerable House members this fall, warned that a Sanders nomination would force more than 40 Democratic candidates in competitive districts — most of which were carried by Trump four years ago — "to run away from the nominee."

Specifically, Bera cited Sanders' signature health care plan, which would re-

place the nation's private insurance system with a government-run Medicare for All system.

"You have to take Sen. Sanders seriously," said Bera, who has endorsed Biden. "Those are going to be tough positions for our members to run on."

Montana Sen. Jon Tester, who led the Senate Democrats' campaign arm the last time Trump was on the ballot, warned that Republicans "are really good at making elections about who's at the top of the ticket."

"I come from a state that's pretty damn red. There is no doubt that having 'socialist' ahead of 'Democrat' is not a positive thing in the state of Montana," Tester, who has not endorsed any 2020 candidate, said of Sanders. "He can overcome that, but I think it's something he's going to have to do." Several Sanders critics noted that he has largely escaped intense scrutiny throughout the campaign, in part because some assumed that Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, an-

other progressive firebrand, was a stronger candidate who would cannibalize his support. With Warren's candidacy struggling to maintain momentum, however, those assumptions are now being questioned.

"He has now emerged as somebody who's got the ability to win the nomination," said former Obama aide Ben LaBolt, who isn't aligned with any 2020 campaign but opposes Sanders.

LaBolt seized on what he called Sanders' short list of accomplishments over three decades in Congress. Over that time, the senator wrote just a handful of bills that ultimately became law.

"He's more concerned about shouting in the wilderness to make an ideological point than getting things done," said LaBolt, whose communications firm has done work for the health insurance industry's push to expand Obama's health care law, the Affordable Care Act, at the expense of Sanders' preferred Medicare for All plan. □

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New U.S. plan keeps autonomous vehicle standards voluntary

By TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writer

The Trump administration on Wednesday unveiled its most recent round of guidelines for autonomous vehicle makers that rely on voluntary standards despite calls for specific regulations.

Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao announced the proposed guidelines in a speech at the CES gadget show in Las Vegas, saying in prepared remarks that "AV 4.0" will ensure U.S. leadership in developing new technologies.

But the guidelines fall short of expectations of auto safety advocates and the National Transportation Safety Board. In November, the NTSB, which investigates crashes and makes safety recommendations, condemned a lack of state and federal regulation for testing autonomous vehicles.

The NTSB said Chao's department failed to lead in regulating the new technology and put autonomous vehicle advancement ahead of saving lives. In her remarks, Chao said that AV 4.0, a joint effort between her department and the White House, unifies autonomous vehicle work across 38 federal departments and agencies. It also establishes a list of government principles and says that safety is her department's No. 1 priority.

"It recognizes the value of private sector leadership in AV research, development and integration," she said. The principles include protecting users and communities, promoting efficient markets by protecting intel-

lectual property and modernizing regulations, and facilitating coordinated standards and policies.

"The goals are simple, clear and consistent," she said. "Improve safety, security and quality of life for all Americans."

Other areas of focus include security and cybersecurity, ensuring privacy and data security and enhancing mobility and accessibility. But the guidelines offer few specifics on how the government will accomplish the goals or put the principles into force.

While the guidelines say that the U.S. government "will promote voluntary consensus standards," there are few details on what the standards should say.

"Voluntary consensus standards can be validated by testing protocols, are supported by private sector conformity assessment schemes, and offer flexibility and responsiveness to the rapid pace of innovation," the document says.

The government will enforce existing laws to ensure companies don't make deceptive claims about the capabilities or limitations of autonomous vehicle technology, according to the document.

The guidelines will be published in the Federal Register, followed by a public comment period.

Cathy Chase, president of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit, called AV 4.0 a "regurgitation" of voluntary standards that have not held the industry accountable.

"I would say it's high on promises and light on de-



In this Sept. 12, 2017 file photo, U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao announces new voluntary safety guidelines for self-driving cars during a visit to an autonomous vehicle testing facility at the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Associated Press

tail," she said Wednesday. "This is a science experiment playing out in real time on our roadways without any safeguards or assurances."

The Trump administration, she said, seems to think that innovation and regulation can't exist at the same time. Her group wants to see the government set minimum standards, like it did with the requirement for seat belts, and let the industry go beyond them.

"Regulations should inspire innovation," Chase said.

AV 4.0 comes less than two months after the NTSB criticized another federal agency, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, for failing to regulate autonomous vehicle testing on public roads. The criticism came just before the board found that a dis-

tracted human safety driver was the main cause of a fatal 2018 Arizona crash involving an Uber autonomous test vehicle that ran down a pedestrian.

Among the NTSB's recommendations were that NHTSA require car developers to submit safety reports, and that NHTSA review the plans to make sure companies have safeguards in place that require human safety drivers to pay attention to the road.

Currently the reports are voluntary and only 16 of about 80 companies testing self-driving vehicles have filed them, according to the NTSB. "The manufacturers are not going to be objec-

tive in evaluating their own safety assessments," NTSB Chairman Robert Sumwalt said at a Senate hearing in November. "There needs to be a federal look at these assessments to make sure that they are done properly."

NHTSA is the government's road safety agency and part of Chao's department. Its acting administrator, James Owens, told senators that the agency will review the NTSB recommendations. The agency previously has said it doesn't want to stand in the way of innovation in autonomous vehicles because they have tremendous life-saving potential. □

Company hired to extract cargo ship months after it capsized

BRUNSWICK, Ga. (AP) — A Texas-based salvage company will cut up and remove a 656-foot (200-meter) shipwreck from St. Simons Sound off the coast of Georgia. The Coast Guard's Unified Command has hired T&T Salvage LLC of Galveston

to remove the Golden Ray cargo ship, The Brunswick News reported. The ship, roughly the size of a 70-story office building, has sat overturned in the sound for four months.

T&T Salvage was chosen Tuesday from among six bidders, including DonJon-

SMIT, the maritime emergency contractor that originally responded when the ship capsized on Sept. 8 while heading out to sea with a cargo of 4,200 vehicles. T&T Salvage was chosen for its extensive experience in the field of maritime demolition, Graff said.



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'Obamacare' mandate: hot for lawyers, ho-hum to consumers

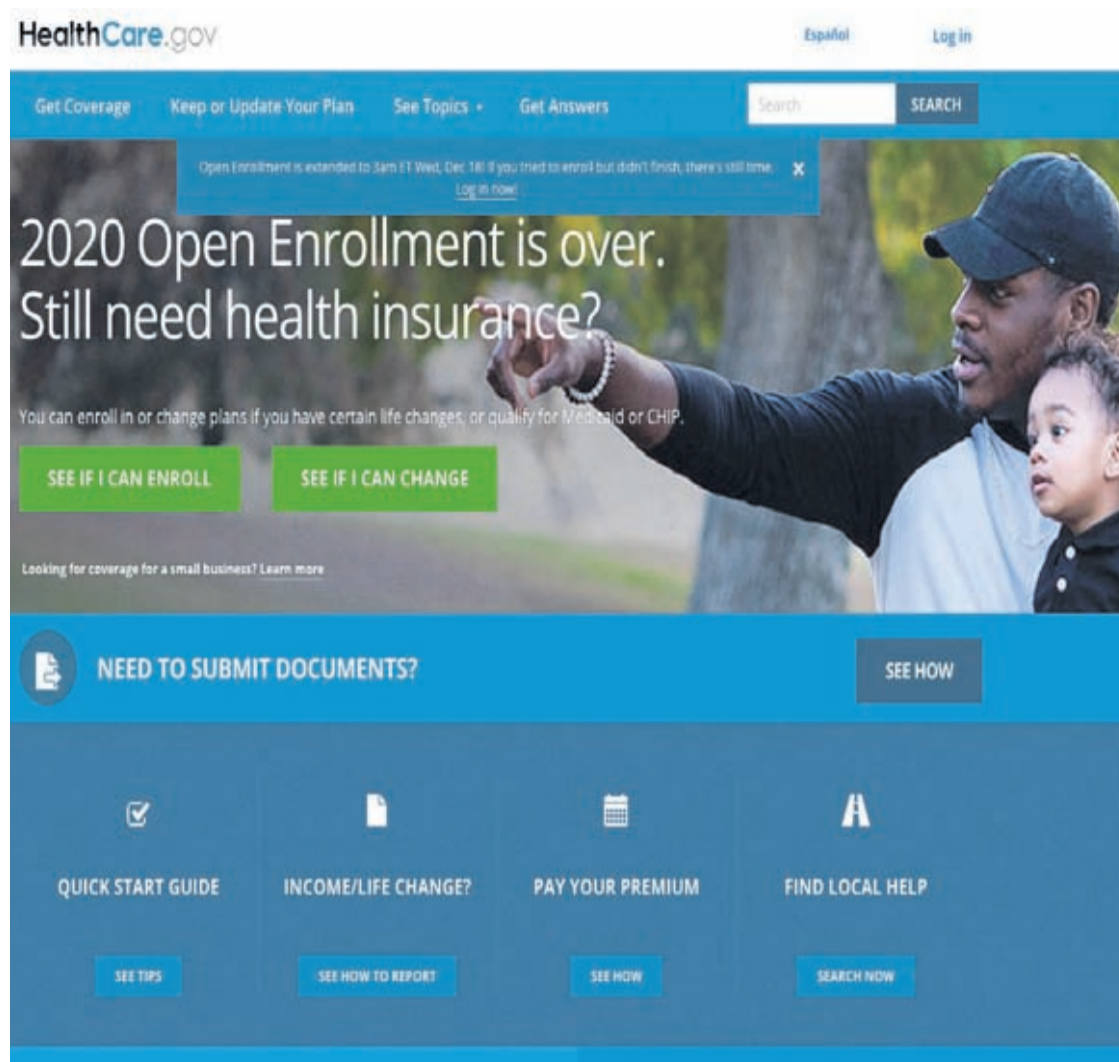
By **RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The repeal of an unpopular fine for people without health insurance has had little impact on "Obamacare" sign-ups or premiums, a gap between the real world and legal arguments from conservatives again challenging the Affordable Care Act. The 10-year-old law has proved more resilient than its creators or detractors imagined, even as the Supreme Court considers whether to take up the latest effort to roll it back. Opponents argue that the constitutionality of the entire 900-page law hinges on the now-toothless penalty for not having health insurance. Collected as a tax by the IRS, the penalty was intended to enforce the law's "individual mandate" that Americans be insured. A previous Republican-led Congress set the fines to \$0, effective last year.

"We've gotten a lot of evidence by now about what the market looks like without a mandate penalty, and on the whole it looks pretty stable, which is surprising because that's not what most people would have expected when the ACA was being written," said Cynthia Cox, who directs research on the health law for the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation.

A Kaiser study released this week found that removal of the penalty pushed premiums up about 5% going into 2019, but the bottom line was a wash because of other factors. Insurers appeared to be making healthy profits.

The penalty was thought to be critical when the law was being written in 2009-2010. The idea was to nudge healthy people to sign up, helping keep premiums in check. But Cox said there's no indication that healthy people have dropped out in droves. In one telling statistic, the Kaiser study found that average hospital days per 1,000 people enrolled dipped slightly in 2019, even after the penalty was eliminat-



This screen grab from the website HealthCare.gov shows the extended deadline for signing up for health care coverage for 2020.

Associated Press

ed. Partial sign-up numbers for 2020 released Wednesday by the government point to stability. Nearly 8.3 million people enrolled in the 38 states served by the federal HealthCare.gov website. That's down only about 2% from last year, when one additional state was using HealthCare.gov. A final count including that state — Nevada — and others that run their own sign-up efforts is expected by the spring.

The insurance mandate was the central issue when the Supreme Court first upheld the health care law in 2012, over a year before HealthCare.gov opened for business.

Chief Justice John Roberts cast the key vote in that 5-4 decision. He found that Congress lacked constitutional authority to require that Americans have health insurance. But because Congress has broad powers to levy taxes, Roberts ruled that a tax on people who did not purchase coverage offered them

was constitutional. That allowed the law to survive what's still seen as its most serious legal challenge. Kathleen Sebelius, health secretary for President Barack Obama, said in 2012 that it was generally accepted that the insurance mandate was part of a three-legged stool key to stable markets. The other two legs were taxpayer-provided subsidies for premiums and a guarantee that patients with preexisting medical conditions could no longer be turned down or charged more. "It was thought that the trade-off for changing the rules on preexisting conditions would have to be ... some penalty incentive so you would get healthy people in the pool, along

with not-healthy people," Sebelius said. "What became clear when the law went into effect (in 2014) is that the subsidies in many ways provided a greater incentive for people get health insurance." Those subsidies are designed so that low- and moderate-income households only spend a fixed percentage of their incomes on premiums, shielding consumers from high sticker prices. Cox agreed that the law's "carrots" seem to have made more of a difference than its "stick." Fast-forward to 2018 and a coalition of conservative states led by Texas won a lower court decision that the insurance mandate was still critical, in a legal

and constitutional sense. U.S. District Court Judge Reed O'Connor in Texas ruled that by zeroing out the tax penalty, Congress rendered the insurance mandate unconstitutional, and without it the entire health law must fall. President Donald Trump agreed.

Recently, a federal appeals court in New Orleans agreed with O'Connor that an unenforceable insurance mandate is unconstitutional. But the appeals court sent the case back to him to see whether other parts of the law can stand. Defending the law, a coalition of Democratic-led states, along with the U.S. House, appealed to the Supreme Court, seeking a fast-track decision amid this year's presidential election. The court has asked lawyers for the conservative states to respond by Friday on the timing question. University of Michigan law professor Nicholas Bagley said the stability of the health insurance markets exposes "the artificiality" of the conservatives' argument.

"It really goes to show how ridiculous it is to claim that Congress understood the mandate to be so essential that if it were to be red-lined out, the rest of the law would have to fall," said Bagley.

Not so fast, said Andrew Schlafly, a lawyer representing groups siding with Texas and the other GOP-led states opposing the law.

"The question is not whether in reality (the ACA) can work without the mandate," said Schlafly. "The test is whether it was intended to work without the mandate. 'Theory does matter to these Supreme Court justices,' he added, 'and they do take theory seriously.'"



UNC newspaper sues over deal to remove Confederate statue

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (AP) — The University of North Carolina Board of Governors violated the state's open meetings laws by secretly negotiating and approving a deal to dispose of a Confederate monument from the campus of the system's flagship school, according to a lawsuit filed by a student newspaper. DTH Media Corp., which publishes The Daily Tar Heel student newspaper on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus, wants a court to void two agreements between the Board of Governors and the state chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, news outlets reported on Wednesday.

"The manner in which the meeting was noticed and conducted effectively prevented any member of the public, including those who may have attended the meeting, from understanding its purpose or outcome, much less raising questions

or objections," the DTH lawsuit said. The deal has been denounced by students and faculty members as paying money to support white nationalism. UNC-Chapel Hill lost a \$1.5 million research grant because of it. "The University will review the claims and respond in court," UNC System spokesman Josh Ellis said when asked for comment, according to The News & Observer. "The University is committed to the spirit and purpose of the Open Meetings Act and UNC Board of Governors meetings are conducted in full accordance with all state laws." Superior Court Judge Allen Baddour said last month that he is reconsidering his approval of the deal. Baddour approved an agreement on Nov. 27 in which the SCV agreed to take ownership of the "Silent Sam" statue and build a center to preserve it. The



In this Aug. 22, 2017 file photo, police surround the "Silent Sam" Confederate monument during a protest to remove the statue at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Associated Press

statue stood for more than a century on the Chapel Hill campus before protesters took it down in August 2018. The university agreed to put \$2.5 million into a trust to help defray the costs of the new center. In addition, UNC-Chapel Hill paid the SCV about \$75,000 not to display Confederate flags or similar banners on any UNC system campus during any meetings or demonstrations for five years. The deal was approved behind closed doors by the Board of Governors' Committee on University Governance, which met via conference call the day before

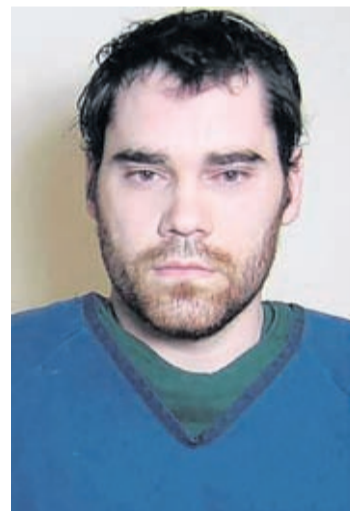
Thanksgiving without any notice. Twenty-two of the 24 board members were on the conference call, and at least one person on the eight-member committee opposed the deal. When the committee returned to open session, it adjourned without public acknowledgment of the settlement, saying only that there would be a news release later in the day. About 45 minutes after the board adjourned, the SCV filed a lawsuit against UNC over "Silent Sam," and Baddour approved a consent agreement between the two sides within five minutes. □

Cash-strapped student charged in Illinois lawyer's death

EDWARDSVILLE, ILL. (AP) — A cash-strapped pharmacy student was charged in the stabbing death of a prominent Illinois attorney whose firm touts more than \$3 billion in compensation for clients. Timothy Michael Banowetz, 28, is accused of fatally stabbing Randy Gori and holding two children captive Saturday night at Gori's home in Edwardsville, Illinois, a city across the Mississippi River from St. Louis. Gori, 47, had two children, but authorities have not said if they were the minors who were held captive. Police believe Banowetz acted alone. Investigators would not comment on any motive, but the crime also included the theft of Gori's 2020 Rolls-Royce Cullinan SUV, along with cash

and the children's cell-phones. Gori had a passion for collecting vehicles, especially Ferraris. He owned 20 Ferraris and served as vice president of a local chapter of the Ferrari Club of America, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported. Banowetz, who was enrolled in the fall at the St. Louis College of Pharmacy, was in jail without bond on charges of first-degree murder and nine other counts. Online court records Wednesday didn't indicate whether he has a lawyer who could comment on the allegations. Gori's actions during the attack, and an interruption of the crime by a woman, likely saved the children's lives, said Madison County Sheriff's Office Capt. Dave

Vucich, who declined to elaborate. "In my 22-year career as a law enforcement official, I've seen a lot of gruesome cases," Vucich said Monday. "But this one elevates to the top of heinous and senseless crimes." Police said Banowetz often moved around but stayed in the St. Louis area. Court records show he was evicted in December from his St. Louis apartment. Police found him Sunday in a wooded area near Gori's home, with the stolen SUV nearby. Gori's law firm specializes in asbestos litigation nationwide, with offices in Edwardsville, St. Louis, New Orleans, Washington, Los Angeles, New York and Orlando, Florida. Gori also founded a real estate and property management



This handout photo provided by the Madison County, Ill., Sheriff's Office shows Timothy Banowetz.

Associated Press

company. Gori was also known for large charitable donations, including a recent \$2.5 million pledge to the city of Edwardsville to help build an ice rink. Banowetz previously attended the College of the Ozarks near Branson, Missouri, from 2010 through 2014, a college spokesman said Tuesday. □

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EU chief warns UK must compromise to get Brexit trade deal

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Three weeks before Britain is due to leave the European Union, the president of the European Commission warned Wednesday that the U.K. won't get the "highest quality access" to the European Union's market after Brexit unless it makes major concessions. In a friendly but frank message to the U.K., Ursula von der Leyen said negotiating a new U.K.-EU trade deal will be tough. She also said the end-of-2020 deadline that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has imposed on negotiations makes it "basically impossible" to strike a comprehensive new agreement in time.

Von der Leyen, who took over as head of the EU's executive branch on Dec. 1, met Johnson at 10 Downing Street in London on Wednesday for the first time since the British leader's election victory last month. Johnson's Conservatives won a substantial parliamentary majority in Britain's Dec. 12 election, giving him the power to end more than three years of wrangling over Brexit and take the U.K. out of the EU on Jan. 31. It will be the first nation to ever leave the bloc, which currently has



European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen delivers a speech at the London School of Economics in London, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020.

Associated Press

28 members.

Britain's departure will be followed by a transition period in which the U.K.-EU relationship will remain largely unchanged while the two sides negotiate a new trade arrangement. Johnson says the U.K. is seeking a wide-ranging free trade deal, but doesn't want to agree to keep all EU rules and standards.

Johnson's office said after the meeting that the U.K. wanted "a broad free trade

agreement covering goods and services, and cooperation in other areas." But it said "any future partnership must not involve any kind of alignment" in which Britain would automatically follow EU rules.

That could cause problems. Speaking at the London School of Economics before her meeting with Johnson, von der Leyen warned that "without a level playing field on environment, labor, taxation and

state aid, you cannot have the highest quality access to the world's largest single market."

"With every choice comes a consequence. With every decision comes a trade-off," she warned.

The EU worries that Britain plans to cut environmental and employment standards in order to position itself as a low-regulation, low-tax competitor to the bloc.

Johnson sought to allay

those fears, telling von der Leyen the U.K. would continue to maintain high standards "in areas like workers' rights, animal welfare, agriculture and the environment," Downing St. said.

International trade agreements typically take years to complete, but Johnson has ruled out extending the post-Brexit transition period beyond the end of 2020, although the EU has offered to prolong it until 2022. Downing Street said Wednesday that "both British and EU citizens rightly expect negotiations on an ambitious free trade agreement to conclude on time." Von der Leyen said the time frame was "very, very tight" and made it "basically impossible" to negotiate anything but a skeleton deal.

"The more divergence there is, the more distant the partnership has to be," she said. "And without an extension of the transition period beyond 2020, you cannot expect to agree on every single aspect of our new partnership. We will have to prioritize."

The German EU chief — who studied in Britain in the 1970s and has proclaimed herself a friend and fan of Britain — did have some encouraging words for Johnson. □

Finland sees unusually mild January, lack of snow in south



In this photo taken on Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2020, cyclists enjoy a sunny day in Helsinki.

Associated Press

JARI TANNER

Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — Unusually mild weather in Finland left the southern part of the

Nordic nation with a surprising absence of snow Wednesday and an unusual delay in the start of "thermal winter," meteorologists

said.

Mainland Finland recorded a high temperature of 7.9 degrees Celsius (46.2 F) and it reached 8.7 degrees Celsius (47.7 F) in the Aland Islands, an autonomous Baltic Sea region of Finland. "Thermal winter" is defined as when sub-zero temperatures set in for a certain number of days, Tuomo Bergman of the Finnish Meteorological Institute said. In southern Finland, where that usually happens in November, January temperatures typically average -10 degrees Celsius (14 F).

Bergman said it was "entirely possible" southern Finland might get weather that cold as late as March, which happened during the winter of 2007-2008.

The above-average temperatures have meant that Finland only has a seasonal blanket of snow north of the central city of Jyväskylä, some 270 kilometers (168 miles) northeast of Helsinki. In Helsinki, the Finnish capital, residents could only go cross-country skiing at designated ski parks where tracks were being kept in shape with the help of snow cannons and other equipment.

Five big icebreakers lying idle at a central Helsinki port stood as another symbol of winter's late start. The Baltic Sea has frozen only in parts of the Gulf of Bothnia between Finland and Sweden, the sea's northernmost arm.

"This is a rare situation, but

not unique. Winters vary quite a lot and are not necessarily alike," Hannu Ylarinne, interim CEO of the state-owned shipping company Arctia, which operates Finland's icebreaker fleet, told Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat on Tuesday.

In Norway, Finland's Nordic neighbor, temperatures reached 19 degrees Celsius (66.2 F) on Jan. 2 in western Moere og Romsdal county, smashing the previous high temperature record for a single day in January.

According to Norwegian meteorologists, statistics show that winters are growing increasingly short in Norway, with a steadily declining number of days with sub-zero temperatures. □



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Leaders of Turkey, Russia urge Jan. 12 cease-fire in Libya

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Turkey and Russia called for a Jan. 12 cease-fire in war-torn Libya on Wednesday while European Union officials intensified diplomatic efforts to cool tensions in the North African nation by holding talks with its prime minister. In a related diplomatic push in Rome, Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte met with Libya's Gen. Khalifa Hifter, whose eastern-based forces have launched a fresh offensive against Libya's U.N.-backed government, sparking the latest crisis. Following a meeting in Istanbul, the leaders of Turkey and Russia called for a cease-fire in Libya to start at midnight on Jan. 12. "Seeking a military solution to the ongoing conflict in Libya only causes further suffering and deepens the divisions among Libyans. Securing an immediate cease-fire is the foremost priority to start an inclusive intra-Libyan political process under U.N. auspices," Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian counterpart Vladimir



Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, right and Russia's President Vladimir Putin, left, attend a ceremony in Istanbul for the inauguration of the TurkStream pipeline, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020. Associated Press

Putin said in a joint statement. Libya is currently governed by dueling authorities in the east and the west. The east-based government, backed by Hifter's forces, is supported by the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, as well as France and Russia. The western,

Tripoli-based government receives aid from Turkey, Qatar and Italy. Turkey has also recently begun sending Turkish soldiers to Libya for training and coordination. The fighting has threatened to plunge Libya into violent chaos rivaling the 2011 conflict that ousted

and killed longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi. "We have been following with great concern the recent developments, particularly the intensified fighting around Tripoli, in long-suffering Libya," Putin and Erdogan said. "The worsening situation in Libya is undermining the security

and stability of Libya's wider neighborhood, the entire Mediterranean region, as well as the African continent, triggering irregular migration, the further spread of weapons, terrorism and other criminal activities including illicit trafficking." Meanwhile in Brussels, Libyan Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj met with European Council President Charles Michel and EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell. Earlier this week, the EU's top diplomat and the foreign ministers of Britain, France, Germany and Italy condemned Turkey's plans to deploy troops to Libya. "Michel expressed concerns about the worrying military escalations in Libya. He underlined that there is no military solution to the Libyan crisis, only a political process can bring peace and stability closer," the European Council said in a statement. "Libyans should be at the heart of defining their own future." Borrell called the situation in Libya "very dangerous," adding "we are maybe facing a watershed point." □

Greece retains negative yield in first debt auction of year

By DEREK GATOPOULOS

Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Greece has raised 487.5 million euros (\$544.4 million) in a treasury bill sale that saw the country maintain its negative interest rate in the first debt auction of the year as the debt-strapped country attempts to regain full market access. The Public Debt Management Agency said the 13-week T-bills were auctioned Wednesday at a yield of -0.08%. Greece's six-month-old conservative government

is hoping to steadily rebuild market access after the country ended its third successive bailout a program in August 2018, emerging from severe financial crisis during which its membership in the euro currency area came under repeated threat. The government is betting on favorable market conditions to try and convince European bailout creditors to ease draconian fiscal targets. Greece is committed to achieving a primary budget surplus — the annual

balance before debt servicing costs — of 3.5% of gross domestic product through 2022. But it wants to introduce more lenient targets a year earlier. Athens is also planning to pay back additional higher-interest loans to the International Monetary Fund ahead of schedule in 2020 to take advantage of the record low-interest rates in bond markets. In Washington on Tuesday, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis met with the new head of the IMF, Kristalina Georgieva. □



Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, delivers a speech during a parliament session in Athens, on Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2019.

Associated Press

Ukrainian airliner crashes in Iran, killing all 176 aboard

By **MOHAMMAD NASIRI**

NASSER KARIMI

JON GAMBRELL

Associated Press

SHAHEDSHAHR, Iran (AP)

— A Ukrainian airliner carrying 176 people crashed on the outskirts of Tehran during a takeoff attempt Wednesday hours after Iran launched its missile attack on U.S. forces, scattering flaming debris and passengers' belongings across farmland and killing everyone on board.

The Iranian military disputed any suggestion the plane had been blown out of the sky by a missile, and Iranian aviation authorities said they suspected a mechanical problem brought down the 3½-year-old Boeing 737. Ukrainian officials initially agreed but later backed away and declined to offer a cause while the investigation is going on.

The Ukraine International Airlines jet was en route to the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv with 167 passengers and nine crew members from several countries, including 82 Iranians, at least 63 Canadians and 11 Ukrainians, according to officials.

Many of the passengers were believed to be international students attending universities in Canada; they were making their way back to Toronto by way of Kyiv after visiting with family during the winter break. The manifest included several teenagers and children, some as young as 1 or 2.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy cut short a visit to Oman to return to Kyiv and said a team of Ukrainian experts would go to Tehran to help investigate the crash.

"Our priority is to find the truth and everyone responsible for the tragedy," he wrote in a Facebook statement.

In Canada, where the crash ranked among the worst losses of life for Canadians in an aviation disaster, the flag over Parliament in Ottawa was lowered to half-staff, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the country is "shocked and



Debris is seen from a plane crash on the outskirts of Tehran, Iran, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020.

Associated Press

saddened." He vowed the government will work to "ensure that this crash is thoroughly investigated and that Canadians' questions are answered."

Major world airlines Wednesday rerouted flights crossing the Middle East to avoid danger amid escalating tensions between the U.S. and Iran, and the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration barred American flights from certain Persian Gulf airspace, warning of the "potential for miscalculation or misidentification" of civilian aircraft.

The plane had been delayed from taking off from Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport by almost an hour.

It never made it above 8,000 feet, crashing just minutes after takeoff, according to data from the flight-tracking website FlightRadar24.

Qassem Biniiaz, a spokesman for Iran's Road and Transportation Ministry, said it appeared a fire erupted in one of its engines and the pilot lost control of the plane, according to the state-run IRNA news agency. The news report did not explain how Iranian authorities knew that.

The pilot apparently couldn't communicate with air-traffic controllers in Tehran in the last moments of the flight, said Hassan

Razaeifar, the head of the air crash investigation committee. He did not elaborate.

Ukraine International Airlines President Yevhen Dykhne, said the aircraft "was one of the best planes we had, with an amazing, reliable crew." In a statement, the airline went further, saying: "Given the crew's experience, error probability is minimal. We do not even consider such a chance."

Gen. Abolfazl Shekarchi, spokesman for the Iranian armed forces, was quoted by the semiofficial Fars news agency as denying the plane has been brought down by a missile. "The rumors about the plane are completely false and no military or political expert has confirmed it," he said. He said the rumors were "psychological warfare" by the government's opponents.

Authorities said they found the plane's so-called black boxes, which record cockpit conversations and instrument data. But it was not immediately clear how much access to the information the Iranians would allow.

Aviation experts were skeptical about Iran's initial claim that the plane was brought down by a mechanical problem.

"I don't see how they would

have known that so quickly," said John Hansman, an aeronautics professor at MIT. "They hadn't had time to look at the flight data recorder. They probably hadn't had time to investigate the physical wreckage of the engines. How do you know it was a mechanical issue versus a surface-to-air missile that went in the engine?"

Many planes have systems that send huge amounts of technical data, including potential problems with the engines or other key systems, to the airline and the manufacturer. But it was unclear whether Ukraine International had paid to download that information automatically during flights, or how much data from such a short flight would tell.

A Boeing spokesman declined to say whether the company obtained any information about the jet during its ill-fated flight.

In 1988, a U.S. Navy cruiser mistakenly shot down an Iranian passenger jet over the Persian Gulf, killing 290 people. Earlier this week, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani referred to that episode in responding to President Donald Trump's threat to attack 52 targets in Iran.

"Those who refer to the number 52 should also remember the number 290,"

Rouhani tweeted. "Never threaten the Iranian nation."

The Ukrainian plane, fully loaded with fuel for its 2,300-kilometer (1,430-mile) flight, slammed into the ground near the town of Shahedshahr, causing fires that lit up the darkened fields before dawn.

Din Mohammad Qassemi said he had been watching the news about the Iranian missile attack on U.S. troops in Iraq in revenge for the killing of Gen. Qassem Soleimani when he heard the crash.

"I heard a massive explosion and all the houses started to shake. There was fire everywhere," he said. "At first I thought (the Americans) have hit here with missiles and went in the basement as a shelter. After a while, I went out and saw a plane has crashed over there. Body parts were lying around everywhere."

The crash left a wide field of debris scattered across farmland, the dead lying among pieces of the shattered aircraft. Their possessions, including a child's cartoon-covered electric toothbrush, a stuffed animal, luggage and electronics, stretched everywhere. Rescuers in masks shouted over the noise of hovering helicopters. They quickly realized there would be no survivors.

This was the first fatal crash involving Ukraine International Airlines, which began flying in 1992, according to the Aviation Safety Network, which tracks accidents.

As for the Boeing 737-800 model that went down, it an extremely common twin-engine jetliner introduced in the late 1990s, with thousands in use around the world, and has one of the best safety records among popular airliners.

The Aviation Safety Network said there have been eight fatal crashes involving the Boeing 737-800 out of nearly 5,000 built. A FlyDubai crash in Russia in 2016 killed 62 people, and an Air India Express disaster in India in 2010 left more than 150 dead. □

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Malaysian graft buster: Voice clips show cover-up by ex-PM

PUTRAJAYA, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysia's Anti-Corruption Commission on Wednesday released a series of audio recordings allegedly showing former Prime Minister Najib Razak seeking help from Abu Dhabi's crown prince and colluding with a former prosecutor to conceal wrongdoings linked to a massive corruption scandal.

The voice clips marked a new blow to Najib, who has denied any misdeeds in the multimillion-dollar looting of the 1MDB investment fund and is on trial for graft after his election defeat in May 2018.

Commission chief Latheefa Koya said the nine phone conversations, recorded from January 2016 to July 2016, revealed a "clear cover-up and criminal conspiracy" by Najib to stifle investigations, fabricate false evidence and obstruct justice in the 1MDB scandal.



Latheefa Koya, chief of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, speaks during a press conference in Putrajaya, Malaysia, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020.

Associated Press

She said the agency has verified that the clips were genuine but declined to say how it obtained them. She said the clips will be

given to police for further action.

"We can confirm their absolute authenticity. The contents are shocking; it's a

cover-up and subversion of justice," Latheefa said.

In a July 26, 2016, conversation, Najib purportedly called Abu Dhabi's Crown

Prince Mohammed bin Zayed to seek an urgent meeting to resolve an "impasse" over payment between 1MDB and Abu Dhabi's International Petroleum Investment Co. That came just days after the U.S. Department of Justice filed lawsuits to seize allegedly ill-gotten assets linked to 1MDB and said at least \$3.5 billion was misappropriated from the fund by people close to Najib.

Najib also allegedly asked Mohammed to forge a loan agreement to help his stepson and Hollywood producer Riza Aziz, who was named in the U.S. lawsuit. Najib said a loan agreement would show the 1MDB money to Riza's production firm Red Granite came from a legitimate source. "I don't want him to be a victim when he was totally unaware of the source of money," Najib told the prince, according to the phone recordings. □

Kenyan lawyer says he is blocked from returning home

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — A Kenyan lawyer says he was removed from an Air France flight as he tried to return home months after being deported to Canada, despite court orders saying he is a Kenyan citizen and should be accorded all rights.

Miguna Miguna said in a Facebook post Wednesday he had been to Germany, Austria, France and Switzerland in his attempt to get home. Air France confirmed the Paris incident in a tweet, saying it had received a request from Kenyan officials.

Miguna was first deported after he swore in Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga in early 2018 as the "people's president" to protest elections that saw President Uhuru Kenyatta sworn in for a second term. The opposition boycotted the vote and called it flawed. Kenya's government asserted that Miguna is a Canadian citizen and had acquired Kenyan citizenship illegally. But Kenya's high court later ordered that his Kenyan passport be restored and he be given safe passage into the country.

Kenya's president in a recent speech alluded to Miguna's situation, saying the government did not have objections to his travel.

In 2018 Kenyatta's government had warned that any attempt to swear in opposition leader Odinga was treasonous and those attending the ceremony faced arrest. Despite that, tens of thousands attended the swearing-in.

Kenyatta and Odinga shook hands in March 2018, ending months of deadly political turmoil that also hurt the East African nation's economy. □



In this Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2018 file photo, opposition politician Miguna Miguna, center, raises his fist as a gesture to the crowd as he stands next to opposition leader Raila Odinga, right, as Odinga holds an oath during a mock "swearing-in" ceremony at Uhuru Park in downtown Nairobi, Kenya.

Associated Press

Puerto Ricans left homeless after biggest quake in century

By **DANICA COTO**

GUANICA, Puerto Rico (AP)

— Cars, cots and plastic chairs became temporary beds for hundreds of families who lost their homes in southwest Puerto Rico as a flurry of earthquakes struck the island, one of them the strongest in a century.

The magnitude 6.4 quake that struck before dawn on Tuesday killed one person, injured nine others and knocked out power across the U.S. territory. More than 250,000 Puerto Ricans remained without water on Wednesday and another half a million without power, which also affected telecommunications.

Another strong aftershock of a 4.7-magnitude struck on Wednesday near the island's southern coast at the same shallow depth as Tuesday's earthquake. No serious damage was immediately reported.

More than 2,000 people were staying in government shelters in the island's southwest region as U.S. President Donald Trump declared an emergency and Puerto Rico Gov. Wanda Vázquez activated the National Guard.

"The magnitude of this event is so serious that the state government and the municipal governments of Puerto Rico do not have the capacity to respond effectively," she said as she praised Trump's decision.

The hardest hit municipality was the southwest coastal town of Guánica. More than 200 people had taken shelter in a gymnasium af-



A Puerto Rican flag hangs within the rubble, after it was placed there where store owners and family help remove supplies from Ely Mer Mar hardware store, which partially collapsed after an earthquake struck Guánica, Puerto Rico, Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2020.

Associated Press

ter a quake on Monday, only for the latest shake to damage that structure — forcing them to sleep outside.

Among them was 80-year-old Lupita Martínez, who sat in the dusty parking lot with her 96-year-old husband by her side. He was sleeping in a makeshift bed, a dark blue coat covering him.

"There's no power. There's no water. There is nothing. This is horrible," Martínez said.

The couple was alone, lamenting that their caretaker had disappeared and was not answering their calls. Like many Puerto Ricans affected by the quake, they had children in the U.S. mainland who

urged them to move there, at least until the earth stops shaking.

While officials said it was too early to estimate the total damage caused by the string of quakes that began the night of Dec. 28, they said hundreds of homes and businesses in the southwest region were damaged or destroyed. Just in Guánica, a town of roughly 15,000 people, nearly 150 homes were affected by the quake, along with three schools, including one three-story structure whose first two floors were completely flattened. In Guánica itself, "We are confronting a crisis worse than Hurricane Maria," said Mayor Santos Seda, refer-

ring to the 2017 storm that devastated the island. "I am asking for empathy from the federal government."

He said officials believe the homes of 700 families in his municipality are close to collapsing.

Tuesday's quake was the strongest to hit Puerto Rico since October 1918, when a magnitude 7.3 quake struck near the island's northwest coast, unleashing a tsunami and killing 116 people.

More than 950 quakes and aftershocks have been recorded in the area of Tuesday night's event since Dec. 31, though most were too weak to be felt, according to U.S. Geologic

Survey.

The USGS said that while it's virtually certain there will be many aftershocks in the next week, the chance of a magnitude 6 quake — similar to Tuesday's — or stronger is around 22 percent.

In Guánica, some people dragged mattresses outside their homes or set up small tents.

Authorities were trying to figure out where to shelter them all as they handed out blankets, food and water to families gathered at the gymnasium for a second night in a row. Many had their belongings in large garbage bags as they sat haphazardly on unstable plastic chairs. Some slept. Others cradled their dogs and many simply stared listlessly into the distance. One elderly man spent an entire day in his wheelchair, refusing to lay down on a cot.

Meanwhile, a handful of people slept in their cars, in chairs or on the ground as cots ran out.

"Now I'm afraid of the house," said 49-year-old Lourdes Guilbe as she wiped away tears and confided that she felt overwhelmed caring for the nearly dozen relatives gathered around her, including her more than 90-year-old grandfather, who sat in a wheelchair wearing green pajamas and socks.

Guilbe said her home is cracked and her daughter's home collapsed, so they weren't sure where they would live in upcoming days. □

After deadly shootings, report says Panama prisons deficient

PANAMA CITY (AP) — A report on prison security highlighted severe deficiencies and "permissiveness" in Panama's penitentiary system a month after the country's deadliest outbreak of prison violence and called for urgent corrective measures.

The report commissioned by President Laurentino Cortizo and issued late Tuesday also lowered the death toll from the Dec. 17 shootings between inmates

at La Joyita lockup on the outskirts of the capital to 13 with 14 wounded, down from 15 previously said to have died. Officials did not explain the change.

The violence reflected a years-old problem of arms, drugs, cellphones, knives and other contraband being smuggled into La Joyita and other prisons, but most attention-grabbing was the use of multiple assault rifles. Public Security Ministry Roldando Mirones said that in

the cellblock where the violence broke out, authorities found two holes about 2 yards (2 meters) deep with concrete covers that had been used to hide the rifles.

La Joyita, set on a former military base, does not have a wall around it nor security cameras, the metal perimeter fences are "deteriorated" and some guard towers have fallen down, said Mirones, who delivered the report to-

gether with Government Minister Carlos Romero.

Such conditions "are inadequate for penitentiary use," Mirones said.

"We found a penitentiary system that is degraded, permissive, with very few controls," Romero said.

Security analyst Severino Mejía of the University of Panama's Institute of Criminology agreed that prison security is deficient.

"The matter of weapons entering and all that moves

around in the prison is a problem of control and supervision," Mejía said, noting that that has led Cortizo to propose a bill on creating a prison security service. "There is no doubt that the penitentiary system, which is an old and recurring problem, was neglected," Mejía added. "This is not a case unique to Panama — in most countries of Latin America, the prisons are centers for human dumping grounds." □

LOCAL



Aruba resort owner/CEO to be debut guest on Facebook live

EAGLE BEACH – Celebrated hotelier and noted environmentalist Ewald Biemans of Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort will be the first-ever interviewee of Green Globe on its debut Facebook Live segment. Social media users can tune-in this Friday, Jan. 10, 2020 as the international sustainability certification organization interviews the Aruban resident.

Biemans will talk candidly about the Eagle Beach resort's sustainability journey and be asked to share insights on how Bucuti & Tara achieved certification as the first and only carbon-neutral hotel in the Caribbean.

Throughout the discussion, Biemans is expected to



share how fighting climate change is a collaborative effort and how the resort's

island home of Aruba is making progress with its sustainability initiatives such as



banning single-use plastics. Bucuti & Tara was recently recertified as Green Globe Platinum, which is the 19th year the property has earned the rigorous certification.

Green Globe is at the forefront of research and development of best practices for sustainability particularly in the tourism sector, which accounts for 90% of

Aruba's GDP. Considering the island's heavy dependence on tourism, Biemans will share proven methods for achieving business success while operating sustainably.

To listen live, visit Green Globe's Facebook page this Friday, Jan. 10, at 10 a.m. local Aruba time.

To learn more about the resort, visit Bucuti.com. □

Aruba to Me

ORANJESTAD – Aruba Today likes to welcome readers to participate in our newspaper. You can see that in our Honored Guest-publications, specials like on Valentine's Day and on other occasions. Throughout the year you are always welcome to send us your vacation picture(s) together with completing the sentence: Aruba to me is (Email: news@arubatoday.com)

For today's newspaper we received some lovely pictures from **Jim & Linda Cunningham** from Nahant, Massachusetts. They wrote to us:

"Aruba to us is.... 'Welcome Home'

"We fell in love on our first visit to Aruba in January, 1984. We got married that September, 1984. We also fell in love with Aruba. We have visited Aruba just about every year since. 30+ times and always stay at the Divi All Inclusive where everyone there always says "welcome home" on our arrival. We've traveled to many other islands, but Aruba is our favorite!" □





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2020, Dedicated to Innovation and Education



ORANJESTAD – In just a blink of an eye we're now in 2020, a new year and a new decade. Surely this New Year will be a successful one filled with knowledge, positive developments, and learning opportunities. As Aruba was transitioning into this new era, the government announced in 2019 that 2020 will be dedicated to innovation and education. Last year the government focused on the family unit as the foundation of the Aruban society and especially with the goal of reducing domestic abuse. In a press conference, last year, the Minister of Education, Science and Sustainable Development, dr. Armando Lampe, seemed very optimistic and expressed on his Facebook page that; "the secret to change is not by focusing your energy on what already exists, but by contributing with something new".

A new year, a new face for the Creative Islander

Considering this year's focus on innovation and education, the Creative Islander decided it was time for a change. In 2018 when this column started, the primary goal was to share my research results on the effect that culture and creativity could have on socio-economic and cultural developments on the island. Since then, it has become so much more. Now that we transitioned into 2020, the Creative Islander has a new logo and is bursting with new ideas and projects. One of the main goals with the rebranding of the Creative Islander is to open the platform to a wider audience, so one of the changes in 2020 is that the column will be present on Facebook.

Also, a website has been made that correlates to Aruba Today's website and Facebook page. On both the website and Facebook page, relevant updates, news, information projects, events, contact information that are not disclosed in the columns are available. The new logo represents the mind and the human thought process stimulated through knowledge and creativity, but incorporates different shapes and colors reflecting Aruba's diverse community and the goal of enhancing community cohesion. All the different colors and shapes together make one solid network, one sustainable island. The idea behind it is to show that there is beauty in imperfection and that everyone has a place in society.

Another noticeable change this year will be the introduction of the "Goal of the Month". For those who are not familiar with the SDGs, they are the UN's 2030 agenda consisting of 17 goals to ensure sustainable development. Almost all countries in the world, including Aruba, has dedicated themselves to the implementation of these goals, with the aim of "leaving no one behind". The "Goal of the Month" will for the most part follow UN's yearly planning and topic overview for 2020. This month, the Goal of the Month will be SDG 4, Quality Education.

The SDGs versus Innovation and Education

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the role and contribution of culture to sustainable development has been more elaborative in national and local cultural policies, especially considering culture's contribution to economic development, social inclusion and education. However, this seems to be very limited or possibly non-existent in Aruba. Even though education is relevant across all the 17 goals, SDG 4, highlights education as a human right and as a key for sustainable development. SDG 4 has 7 targets that aim by 2030 to ensure: equitable and quality primary and secondary education; access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education; equal access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university; the increase of relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship, and much more.

Regarding educational statistics of Aruba, according to Franken (2019) "primary education has the highest number of students (35% of student population of Aruba), while in the secondary level, the general education MAVO has the highest number of students (14% of student population of Aruba). Higher education in Aruba counts for 3% of the total student (Depart-

ment of Education Aruba, 2019)" (p. 20). Furthermore, it is stated that "from the report 'Enseñanza na Aruba: Relato Estadístico 2016-2017' (Education in Aruba: Statistical Report 2016-2017) in 2016, females represent approximately 50% of the total student population of Aruba. However, looking at relevant (innovative) sectors such as the science & technology department at the EPI, only 10% of the 337 students in 2016 are female, thus a low female participation rate in STEM studies. On the other hand, looking at female participation in higher education, in 2016 this reached 67% at the University of Aruba and 94% at the IPA, thus a high female participation rate in other fields" (p. 21).

Within the UN body, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is responsible for solving issues such as the impact of digital technology on culture and new culture-related professions, the links between culture, creativity and innovation, the relationship between culture and education, and the ethics of artificial intelligence related to culture are likely to emerge in the coming decades. In their eyes, cities (such as Oranjestad and San Nicolas), serve as pedals of innovation and have become essential stakeholders in connecting culture to development priorities such as; the revitalization of public spaces, the support of education for sustainable development, and the support of intercultural discourse. Undeniably, the rising participation of civil society in sustainable development also lays the foundation for more inclusive policies. Hence, education in the 21st century have taken on a new meaning, with the aim of strengthening non-formal, technical and vocational education and training and lifelong learning, in a way that is fitting to the diversity of the population and the overall challenges of inclusion and social cohesion.

Continued on Page 15

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2020, Dedicated to Innovation and Education

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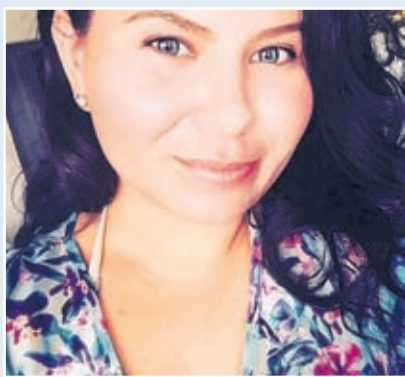
Furthermore, UNESCO is continuously leading discussions on how to better engage youth in educational projects related to culture and heritage. According to the Forum of Ministers of Culture in 2019 "leveraging culture to further education goals (SDG 4) across all continents is an essential effort, which still remains underexplored" in regions such as the Caribbean. Very few educational or cultural policies prioritize cultural and arts education despite the challenge of youth unemployment (SDG 8)". In 2016, the youth unemployment on Aruba reached 18% (CBS, 2019) and has been decreasing slowly since then, but not enough. "Arts education that empowers young people to value local culture and heritage lays the groundwork for the expansion of the creative sector and coun-

ter balances the strong influence of globalized cultural products". In these last few days there has been a lot of discussion in the community regarding Aruban cultural heritage and traditions that are either not respected (the Dande) or diminishing (the Tumba). The most popular arguments revolve around the fact that we as a country have failed (still failing) to educate our younger generations to appreciate and love Aruba's cultural heritage resulting in a portion of our community being detached from its own culture and traditions.

There is no doubt that Aruba has work to do. Not only do we need to innovate as a country, but we need to innovate within the education system itself, while keeping culture and creativity a priority. As a small country, we have come a long way, but like the Minister Lampe stated,



we need to dare to focus on bringing new ideas to the forefront and not being afraid to change and innovate into the 21st century. □



Biography - Thaïs G. Franken (24) is a recently graduated Aruban student at the University of Maastricht (UM). She obtained her graduate double master of science degree in Public Policy and Human Development in collaboration with the United Nations University Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT). Back home, on the beautiful island of Aruba, she completed her Bachelor of Arts in Organization, Governance & Management (OGM) at the University of Aruba (UA), where she successfully defended her thesis titled "Placing Culture and Creativity at the Heart of the Aruban Sustainable Development". It was precisely this research project that inspired the emergence of the "Creative Islander" column in 2018. Thaïs is very passionate about topics such as sustainability, innovation, culture, creativity, social entrepreneurship and their role in public management. Next to her academic interests, she enjoys reading, writing, dancing and cooking.

Aruba National Park review of 2019: Conservation of Aruba's Nature is responsibility of all of us



ORANJESTAD – Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba (FPNA) is looking back at a year where there were many advancements made in regards to conservation of Aruba's Nature. With the establishment of the Marine Park, and soon to be added 16+ nature areas in 2020, the conservation work to be done will be complex and will bring its challenges that FPNA will focus on during the new year.

Service Level Agreement

Last August, FPNA entered into an agreement with the Government of Aruba, signing a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The purpose of the SLA is to reach a consensus on the tasks and efforts that FPNA is responsible for in order to reach its statutory goals. Additionally, the SLA implies that FPNA will take full responsibility with the task of conservation and protection of nature areas of management assigned to the foundation including scientific research on biodiversity which goes hand in hand with conservation education to the community at large.

Purchase of Private Land at Boca Prins

Another positive step for FPNA this year was the purchase of a private land at Boca Prins that was effectuated last September. With such

a positive result, FPNA will continue its efforts and look at the possibilities to acquire other private lands within the borders of Arikok National Park to guarantee the conservation and management of this nature reserve.

Nature and Environment Education

During the month of December the pilot project for Nature and Environment Education (NEE) was realized. The pilot project will be implemented as part of the National curriculum for primary schools with pilot schools St. Jan Kleuterschool, Colegio Laura Wernet- Paskel, Cacique Macuarima and Scol Primario Cacique Aterima. The pilot project covers three themes: Waste, Healthy Lifestyle and Flora & Fauna. Visit our website to read more details on the pilot project.

Junior Rangers

This year again two very successful junior ranger camps were organized for Aruba's youth of 9-12 years old. Four of FPNA's junior rangers were so lucky as to attend an informative nature exchange on Bonaire in October, courtesy of the organizer the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA). They had the opportunity to engage and discuss different environmental topics with the youth of four other islands and were inspired to make a differ-

ence when back home.

Botanical Garden

In 2019 FPNA agreed to start developing a botanical garden from the already existing collections at Hofi Shon Shoco and Cunucu Arikok. The future botanical garden will hold and display documented col-

lections of locally relevant living plants for the purposes of scientific research and conservation, and for the education, inspiration and wellbeing of the community at large.

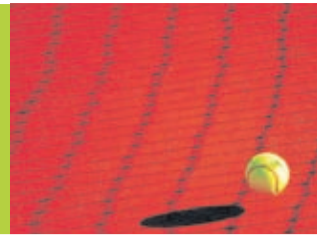
Shoco Conservation

In November – for the third year in a row – the team of Shoco (Aruba burrowing owl) volunteers was further trained in Shoco conservation. Experts from the USA joined in and played a supportive role, while budding scientists from Venezuela also came to learn from our successful joint-project with the Aruba Birdlife Conservation. Numerous artificial burrows were installed all over the island, including at golf courses and the marine barracks, some of which welcomed their first baby owls this year.

FPNA would like to extend its gratitude to all employees, volunteers and community of Aruba for their support during this past year and extends its message to everyone that conservation of Aruba's nature is the responsibility of all of us. FPNA will have revised operating hours this holiday season. Everyone who would like to visit the national park is subject to a conservation fee of Afl. 5.00 for adults or Afl. 28 for a year pass, kids under 18 years are free of charge. We would like to wish everyone Happy holidays and a prosperous 2020! □



SPORTS



Heisman reunion: 5 winners suit up for Ravens-Titans matchup

By **DAVID GINSBURG**
AP Sports Writer
OWINGS MILLS, Md. (AP)

— The top prize for individual excellence in college football is the Heisman Trophy. For the first time in the Super Bowl era, five winners of that prestigious keepsake are expected to suit up in the same game, each in pursuit of the NFL's most coveted team award — the Vince Lombardi Trophy.

Baltimore will bring three Heisman winners (Lamar Jackson, Mark Ingram, Robert Griffin III) into Saturday night's playoff game against Tennessee, which has a pair of players (Marcus Mariota, Derrick Henry) who accepted the trophy presented annually to the most outstanding performer in college football.

"Five? I didn't even think about that," said Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson, who won the 2016 Heisman with Louisville. "It's going to be incredible."

For all he accomplished at Louisville during that amazing season three years ago, Jackson would gladly trade his statue for the opportunity to hoist the trophy in Miami on Feb. 2.

"That's the trophy I want," Jackson said.

"That's the best trophy you can get playing football. That's what I want, that's what the team wants, that's what we're going to get."

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B'RUINED



Pastrnak, Rask lead Bruins over Predators 6-2

Boston Bruins goaltender Tuukka Rask, of Finland, reaches for the puck in the second period of an NHL hockey game against the Nashville Predators Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2020, in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press
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Switzerland's Daniel Yule competes on his way to win an alpine ski, men's World Cup slalom in Madonna di Campiglio, Italy, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020.

Associated Press

Swiss skier Yule wins Madonna di Campiglio slalom again

MADONNA DI CAMPIGLIO, Italy (AP) — Swiss skier Daniel Yule showed his surprising victory a year ago was no fluke by winning a World Cup night slalom again Wednesday.

Protecting his first-run advantage, Yule won by 0.15 seconds ahead of Norwegian favorite Henrik Kristoffersen, also a two-time victor on the steep and icy Canalone Miramonti course.

Frenchman Clement Noel, the winner in Zagreb, Croatia, on Sunday, finished third, 0.25 behind, after posting the fastest second run to move up from eighth. Yule, who hasn't won anywhere else on tour, took the victory in last year's race when first-run leaders Marcel Hirscher — who has since retired — and Kristoffersen straddled gates in

the second leg.

Sebastian Foss-Solevaag of Norway was fourth and Alexis Pinturault of France was fifth.

Pinturault moved back atop the overall standings, one point ahead of Norwegian speed specialist Aleksander Aamodt Kilde and four points ahead of Kristoffersen in what is shaping up to be a close fight to succeed Hirscher, the eight-time defending overall champion.

Kristoffersen moved atop the slalom standings, two points ahead of Noel.

Conditions were perfect on the floodlit course, with the snow hard and icy.

No Americans qualified for the second run.

The men next go to Adelboden, Switzerland, for a giant slalom and slalom this weekend. □

MLS plans jersey reveals, other events to mark 25th season

By The Associated Press

Major League Soccer has unveiled its plans to celebrate its 25th season, including a jersey reveal ahead of New York Fashion Week. The 26-team league, including expansion teams in Miami and Nashville, kicks off its 2020 season on Feb. 29. In the

run-up to the season, Adidas and the league will reveal new jerseys on Feb. 5, a day before Fashion Week gets underway. Commissioner Don Garber, team owners, coaches and players will also hold a league-wide media event in New York later in the month to preview the season. □



International team player Abraham Ancer of Mexico plays his second shot on the 6th hole in his singles match during the Presidents Cup golf tournament at Royal Melbourne Golf Club in Melbourne, Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019.

Associated Press

Ancer looking for Presidents Cup bounce in Honolulu

HONOLULU (AP) — Abraham Ancer can't remember playing better with so little to show for it.

His hope is the payoff is not far away.

Ancer arrived in Hawaii for the Sony Open with his confidence still brimming from a solid debut in the Presidents Cup last month in Australia. He was among seven rookies on the International team. That didn't keep Adam Scott from saying on the eve of the matches he would be shocked if the 28-year-old Mexican wasn't "a big point winner for us."

Ancer delivered by going unbeaten in four teams matches. And when the pressure was even greater — singles against Tiger Woods, with social media driving a plot that Ancer wanted a piece of him — Ancer held his own until Woods outlasted him in 16 holes to start a U.S. comeback.

"A lot of good stuff came out of the Presidents Cup," Ancer said. "Just playing a lot of golf under a lot of pressure. I like to put myself in those situations. I become a better player when I put myself in those situations, and moving forward, I feel like I will be a little calmer in situations where I

would be normally stressed out."

He felt like every shot mattered, not just for him but for the team.

Now he's back on his own, playing against a 144-man field at windy Waialae Country Club, not nearly as many fans watching from along the ropes or in front of the TV.

He is among 15 of the top 50 in the world ranking, led by Justin Thomas, who won the Sentry Tournament of Champions last week at Kapalua and has won three of his last six starts on the PGA Tour.

Ancer is still looking for his first PGA Tour victory. He won late in 2018 at the Australian Open, which earned him a spot in the British Open. He did well enough last year, particularly his runner-up finish to Patrick Reed at Liberty National, to make it the Tour Championship and earn a spot in the Masters for the first time. "It just shows me what I need to get better at, how you feel under pressure," Ancer said of his 3-1-1 mark at Royal Melbourne. "I can take that and look back when I'm in a situation like that, maybe playing in the last round for a chance to win. I'll draw back and remember how I

felt that day."

A great week for him ended awkwardly because of his match against Woods.

Ancer was asked a month before the Presidents Cup who he wanted to play, and he mentioned Woods, the greatest of his generation and an idol for most players on both teams in Melbourne.

It was portrayed as poking Tiger, with his quote posted on social media accounts as a reminder. Woods played well, and the match turned on the 14th hole when Woods made an 8-foot par putt and Ancer missed his par from about 6 feet. Woods went 2 up and closed him out with a birdie on the 16th.

"Abe wanted it. He got it," Woods said during the winner's press conference.

Ancer didn't want the loss or the narrative to ruin an otherwise good week.

"I tried not to let it get to me," Ancer said. "That was actually a month before in Mayakoba when I got asked this question. I was like, 'Well out of the 12 guys who would I like to play on a big stage in a big event like that? Yeah, obviously I would like to play my hero growing up, Tiger Woods. It would be an incredible experience.' □

MLB to investigate reports 2018 champion Red Sox stole signs

By **KYLE HIGHTOWER**

AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Major League Baseball says it will investigate allegations the Boston Red Sox illegally used their video replay room to steal signs between opposing pitchers and catchers during their 2018 World Series championship season.

The claims were made Tuesday in a report by The Athletic. The website cited three anonymous sources it said were with the Red Sox during the 2018 season who said some players visited the replay room during games to get information on sign sequences.

Those sources told The Athletic that the Red Sox weren't able to do it during the postseason because of in-person monitors used by MLB in those games.

"The Commissioner made clear in a September 15, 2017 memorandum to

clubs how seriously he would take any future violation of the regulations regarding use of electronic equipment or the inappropriate use of the video replay room. Given these allegations, MLB will commence an investigation into this matter," the league said in a statement.

The Red Sox said they will cooperate as MLB looks into the allegations.

"We were recently made aware of allegations suggesting the inappropriate use of our video replay room," the team said in a statement. "We take these allegations seriously and will fully cooperate with MLB as they investigate the

matter."

The incident that prompted MLB's 2017 warning from Commissioner Rob Manfred to teams came after the Red Sox were fined an undisclosed sum for "sending electronic communications from their video replay room to an athletic trainer in the dugout" during an August 2017 series against the rival New York Yankees.

The New York Times reported that general manager Brian Cashman filed a complaint with the commissioner's office regarding that incident which included video. The newspaper said it showed a member of Boston's training staff looking at his Apple Watch



Boston Red Sox manager Alex Cora speaks during the Major League Baseball winter meetings Monday, Dec. 9, 2019, in San Diego.

Associated Press

in the dugout and relaying a message to players.

Manfred said at the time that future violations would be subject to more serious sanctions, including possible loss of draft picks. He said last month that he has the authority to levy even stiffer penalties.

The latest allegations against the Red Sox come after The Athletic reported last month that the Houston Astros allegedly stole signs during home games of their 2017 World Series championship season by using a camera positioned in center field. □

Nats-Mets, Tigers-Indians start earliest opening day

NEW YORK (AP) — The World Series champion Washington Nationals will be at the New York Mets, and Detroit will play at Cleveland on March 26 in the first two games of Major League Baseball's earliest opening day other than international games. Washington's game is part of a nationally televised tripleheader on ESPN and will be followed by San Francisco at the Los Angeles Dodgers at 4:10 p.m. EDT and the Los Angeles Angels at AL champion Houston at 7:10 p.m.

Other AL opening-day games (all times EDT) are: Kansas City at the Chicago White Sox (2:10 p.m.), New York Yankees at Baltimore (3:05 p.m.), Boston at Toronto (3:37 p.m.), Minnesota at Oakland (4:07 p.m.) and Texas at Seattle (4:10 p.m.). □

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Bertram "Driftwood" or on their more spacious 37ft twin engine Bertram called "Living Easy". Both yachts are available for charters from 8am to 12 noon, or from 1 to 5pm (6-hour trips also available). To book a fishing charter visit www.driftwoodfishingcharters.com or call Herbert direct at (297)-5924040.



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Jackson hopes to receive help from Ingram (Alabama, 2009) and backup quarterback Robert Griffin III (Baylor, 2011). Griffin will start on the bench against the Titans and Ingram is questionable with a calf injury, but earlier this season all three were in the backfield for what was dubbed "The Heisman Package." Could we see it again this weekend?

"It could resurface but that's not my decision," Griffin said. "I know we're focused on beating the Tennessee Titans, and if the Heisman package is part of that, that's what we're going to do."

Griffin chuckled when asked the significance of



Baltimore Ravens quarterback Robert Griffin III looks to pass against the Pittsburgh Steelers during the first half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2019, in Baltimore.

Associated Press

having Baltimore's Heisman trio being joined at the stadium by Mariota (Oregon, 2014) and Henry (Alabama, 2015).

"I wouldn't say we're get-

ting dressed and going out on the field and saying, 'Oh man, there's five Heisman Trophy winners out there.' But it is a cool aspect of the game," Griffin said. "Maybe

we'll get a picture after the game, but I know that's not what we're thinking about right now."

The Titans benched Mariota in mid-October after the offense managed only one touchdown in a 10-quarter span and was coming off a shutout loss in Denver. Since being replaced by Ryan Tannehill, Mariota has been playing the role of the opposing quarterback on the scout team, this week doing his best imitation of Jackson for the Tennessee defense.

Mariota has played in each of the past two games, however, throwing a 24-yard pass to A.J. Brown in the regular-season finale win in Houston and a 4-yard toss to Dion Lewis in last week's playoff win over New England. Mariota will hit the free-agent market in March.

Henry and Ingram both surpassed 1,000 yards rushing this year. The former Crimson Tide stars won't necessarily have to seek each other before Saturday's game because they just re-

cently spoke.

"I talked to Mark the other day, and we were just catching up," Henry said. Winning the Heisman Trophy automatically makes the recipient part of a very special club. That's why the modern football world has never before seen five Heisman winners in uniform at the same NFL game.

"There are only so few of us, and every year there's only one more," Griffin said. "So this game, it's something that you'll reflect on later in life and think, 'That was a really cool moment.' But when you're in the moment, it's not as if we're all walking around with HEISMAN on the back of our shirt or carrying our Heisman Trophies." Like Jackson, Griffin wasn't even aware he was on the brink of sharing in a historic moment.

"If no one told me there were five Heisman Trophy winners in the game, it wouldn't click for me," RG3 said. "But yeah, now that people have been saying it, I'm honored to be part of that." □



Bruins beat Predators 6-2 to spoil Hynes' debut as coach

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — David Pastrnak scored for the third consecutive game and the Boston Bruins beat Nashville 6-2 on Tuesday night, spoiling the debut of new Predators coach John Hynes.

Hynes was hired as the third coach in franchise history earlier in the day to replace Peter Laviolette, who was fired Monday after 5½ seasons as coach. Hynes was fired as coach of the New Jersey Devils on Dec. 3. Danton Heinen, Patrice Bergeron, Chris Wagner, David Krejci and Charlie Coyle also scored for the Bruins, who snapped a three-game losing streak. Tuukka Rask made 34 saves.

Filip Forsberg and Mikael Granlund scored for Nashville, which has lost five of six. Pekka Rinne finished with 30 saves.

BLUES 3, SHARKS 2

ST. LOUIS (AP) — David Peron scored his 18th goal of the season and Jordan Binnington stopped 28 shots to lead St. Louis over San Jose. Tyler Bozak and Ivan Barbashev also scored for the Blues, who have won six straight at home. Timo Meier and Erik Karlsson had San Jose's goals.

This was the first matchup between the teams in St. Louis since the Blues eliminated the Sharks in Game 6 of last year's Western Conference Final. St. Louis won 5-2 in San Jose on Dec. 21. The Blues are 8-3-1 in their last 12 regular-season games against the Sharks.

RANGERS 5, AVALANCHE 3

NEW YORK (AP) — Artemi Panarin had a goal and two assists, and Igor Shesterkin stopped 29 shots to win his NHL debut as New York beat Colorado.

Mika Zibanejad and Ryan Strome each had a goal and an assist, and Chris Kreider and Brady Skjei also scored for the Rangers. Jesper Fast had three assists and Tony DeAngelo added two.

J.T. Compher scored twice and Nathan MacKinnon had a goal in his 500th game for the Avalanche, who have lost two straight.



Boston Bruins goaltender Tuukka Rask, of Finland, reaches for the puck in the second period of an NHL hockey game against the Nashville Predators Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2020, in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

Andrei Burakovsky had two assists and Philipp Grubauer finished with 24 saves.

Shesterkin was 15-4-3 with a 1.93 goals-against average and three shutouts in 23 games with Hartford of the AHL in his first season in North America. The 24-year-old Russian, called up on Monday, was a fourth-round pick by the Rangers in the 2014 NHL draft.

CAPITALS 6, SENATORS 1

WASHINGTON (AP) — T.J. Oshie and Alex Ovechkin each scored two goals as Washington defeated Ottawa.

Oshie, who scored the tying goal in Sunday's wild comeback win over San Jose, tied this one at 1. The Capitals, who have won three straight, scored six unanswered goals after Artem Anisimov gave the Senators a 1-0 lead at 5:40 of the first period. Ottawa has lost five straight, its second five-game skid of the season.

Ilya Samsonov stopped 26 shots to bring his record to 12-2-1.

Craig Anderson allowed five goals on 30 shots before he was pulled after Lars Eller's goal at 2:08 of the third period. Radko Gudas also scored for the Capitals.

HURRICANES 5, FLYERS 4, OT

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Dougie Hamilton scored 1:56 into overtime on a shot between goalie Brian Elliott's pads to lift Carolina over Philadelphia.

Warren Foegele, Jake Gardiner, Lucas Wallmark and Joel Edmundson also scored for the Hurricanes, who bounced back from a two-goal deficit in the first period with four straight goals, then squandered their own two-goal cushion. Carolina stopped a two-game skid and improved to 3-2 on its seven-game homestand.

Travis Konecny, Michael Raffl, Nicolas Aube-Kubel and Travis Sanheim scored for the Flyers, who lost their fourth straight and dropped five of six on their road trip. After the game, Carolina announced the signing of veteran forward Justin Williams for the remainder of the season. Williams has won three Stanley Cups, two with the Kings and one with the Hurricanes. He has 312 goals and 474 assists in 1,244 career games.

FLAMES 2, BLACKHAWKS 1

CHICAGO (AP) — Elias Lindholm scored twice to reach 300 points in his 500th NHL game, and Calgary topped Chicago for its third straight win.

Matthew Tkachuk had two assists for the Flames, who

lost 5-3 to Chicago in their first meeting of the season on New Year's Eve. Cam Talbot made 31 saves.

The Blackhawks lost key forward Dylan Strome to a right ankle injury early in the second period. They had won four of five during one of their best stretches of the season.

Dominik Kubalik scored his 13th goal for Chicago, and Corey Crawford stopped 26 shots.

ISLANDERS 4, DEVILS 3, OT

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — Anders Lee scored with 51 seconds left on the clock in overtime to lift New York over New Jersey.

Casey Cizikas, Jordan Eberle and Tom Kuhnhackl also scored for the Islanders. Thomas Greiss made 32 saves, including one on defenseman Sami Vatanen on a 3-on-1 break in overtime.

P.K. Subban, Nico Hischier and Kyle Palmieri scored for the Devils, who were looking for their second win over the Islanders in less than a week.

Mackenzie Blackwood shook off an illness and bloodied mouth to stop 37 shots for New Jersey.

LIGHTNING 9, CANUCKS 2

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Carter Verhaeghe had his first career hat trick and Tampa Bay scored three times in

less than a minute to finish a six-goal second period that propelled the Lightning past Vancouver for their season-best eighth straight victory.

Verhaeghe, Tyler Johnson, Steven Stamkos, Alex Killorn, Nikita Kucherov and Erik Cernak all scored in the second as the Lightning matched a team record for goals in a period. They chased goaltender Jacob Markstrom and ended the Canucks' seven-game winning streak.

Brayden Point had three assists as Tampa Bay built a 6-2 lead against Markstrom, who was pulled with just over two minutes left in the third after yielding six goals on 21 shots. Verhaeghe, Kucherov and Cernak scored within a span of 56 seconds to finish the goalie's night.

Point added his 18th goal of the season, assisted by Stamkos and Cernak, when he beat Markstrom's replacement, Thatcher Demko, early in the third. Verhaeghe scored twice in the period, getting his third of the game on a 5-on-3 power play with 1:51 remaining.

Tampa Bay's eight-game winning streak is its longest since the team won a franchise-record 10 straight last February. Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 21 of 23 shots, with Elias Pettersson giving the Canucks a 1-0 first-period lead and Loui Eriksson briefly making it 2-all in the second.

PENGUINS 4, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 3

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Dominik Kahun had a goal and an assist, Tristan Jarry made 32 saves and Pittsburgh defeated Vegas.

The Penguins have won three straight and six of seven on the road (6-1-0).

Vegas had its season-best four-game win streak snapped.

Evgeni Malkin, Patric Hornqvist and Brandon Tanev also scored for the Penguins, who had 16 shots on goal. Max Pacioretty, Paul Stastny and Reilly Smith scored for Vegas. Marc-Andre Fleury made 12 saves against his former team. □

Davis bruises lower back in Lakers' 117-87 win over Knicks

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Anthony Davis left in the third quarter after bruising his lower back on a painful fall during the Los Angeles Lakers' sixth straight victory, 117-87 over the New York Knicks on Tuesday night. Davis bruised his sacrum — the bottom part of his spine above the tailbone — when he attempted to block Julius Randle's driving shot. He got knocked off balance and fell awkwardly to the court, landing hard on his back with 2:45 left in the third.

The six-time All-Star pounded the court in pain and stayed down for roughly two minutes, but eventually rose with his teammates' help and then slowly walked off unaided.

X-rays were negative, but Davis didn't return to the game. His agent, Rich Paul, said his client felt extremely sore.

LeBron James scored 31 points and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 15, but the Lakers (30-7) didn't exactly celebrate becoming the second team to win 30 games this season.

R.J. Barrett scored 19 points for the Knicks, and Randle



Portland Trail Blazers forward Carmelo Anthony (00) reacts after sinking a go-ahead basket against the Toronto Raptors during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2020, in Toronto.

Associated Press

had 15 points and 10 rebounds against his former team. New York dropped to 0-3 on its four-game West Coast trip.

KINGS 114, SUNS 103

PHOENIX (AP) — De'Aaron Fox scored 27 points, Nemanja Bjelica added

19 and Sacramento rallied from a 21-point deficit in the third quarter to beat Phoenix.

The Kings — who have won three of their last four — got big contributions from bench players Dewayne Dedmon and Trevor Ariza.

Dedmon finished with 12 points and 10 rebounds and Ariza — who played for Phoenix part of last season — added 15 points.

The Suns were led by Devin Booker, who scored 34 points and had seven assists. It was Booker's seventh

straight game with at least 30 points, which extends his franchise record.

Deandre Ayton added 21 points and nine rebounds. Kelly Oubre Jr. had 17 points.

TRAIL BLAZERS 101, RAPTORS 99

TORONTO (AP) — Carmelo Anthony made the winning basket with four seconds remaining and Portland rallied to beat Toronto.

Anthony scored 28 points, Damian Lillard had 20 and Hassan Whiteside added 14 points and 16 rebounds for the Trail Blazers, who snapped a four-game losing streak in Toronto and won for the second time in 10 meetings with the Raptors.

Anfernee Simons scored 12 points and C.J. McCollum had 10. Kyle Lowry had 24 points and 10 rebounds, and Serge Ibaka added 17 points and 11 rebounds as the injury-ravaged Raptors lost for just the second time in 16 games against opponents with losing records.

Oshae Brissett scored a career-high 12 points for Toronto. and Chris Boucher also had 12, including 10 straight Raptors points in the fourth. □



New York Liberty WNBA basketball team new head coach Walt Hopkins poses for photographers after a news conference at Barclays Center, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020, in New York.

Associated Press

By DOUG FEINBERG

NEW YORK (AP) — It's been a busy offseason for the New York Liberty and now the franchise has a new coach — Walt Hopkins. The team held a news conference Wednesday at Barclays Center, its new home for the coming season, to introduce Hopkins.

"Walt's a genius. He has this humble confidence about him," Liberty general manager Jonathan Kolb said. "He's a person of character. He's a person of high basketball intellect. He's an elite level communicator."

Hopkins had been an assistant for the Minnesota Lynx

Walt Hopkins hired as New York Liberty coach

since 2017. Before that, he was the academic coach at Cal. He previously was director of basketball operations and player development for the Tulsa Shock.

The 34-year-old coach is excited for the bright future the Liberty have on and off the court and said that was a big reason why he decided to take the job.

"The ownership, the No. 1 pick, the new arena, the move to Brooklyn, all of it are factors," Hopkins said. "Had this team been in Westchester with this ownership, I still would have jumped at it. Those are icing on the cake. Things

that are really nice, I didn't need to him to help make the decision; it was more about the people."

Former coach Katie Smith's contract wasn't renewed after the season ended in September. The Liberty have the first pick in the WNBA draft in April. Neither Kolb nor Hopkins would say who they were taking first, although the consensus top pick is Oregon star guard Sabrina Ionescu.

"We need to get it right, just like this coaching search," Kolb said. "We'll be doing our homework there. We're excited about the possibilities. Having the No. 1 pick is a huge blessing and we're excited to get to work."

This was the first coaching hire for the Liberty under owner Joe Tsai's group, which bought the team last year. Tsai also owns the Brooklyn Nets.

Kolb said the Liberty spoke with more than 20 people about the opening.

"It was a large pool and we did that on purpose. ... All had different levels of backgrounds and qualities. We looked everywhere far and wide," Kolb said. "Needed someone who coaches women and can relate to them. Someone who can motivate, worked with elite level athletes. The more we looked at that, the more Walt's name made sense." □

Column: Black coaching hires still at dismal level in NFL

By **TIM DAHLBERG**
AP Sports Columnist

A year ago, Richard Lapchick was at least willing to consider it might be cyclical. Not any longer. Not after all but one of the coaching vacancies in the NFL have been filled. Not after — in a league where 70% of players are minorities — blacks have been hired for only two of the 19 open head coaching spots over the last three years. "It's very discouraging that this continues to happen," said Lapchick, the director of The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at Central Florida. "It's not like there are no qualified candidates. These people are out there and ready." They may be ready, but NFL owners apparently aren't. Despite the adoption of the Rooney Rule in 2003 to increase the number of black head coaches, there are only three among the four minority head coaches (Washington's Ron Rivera is Hispanic) currently employed in the league. And, with only the Cleveland Browns still looking, that number won't be changing much — if at all. "There's not much to be optimistic about from this year's results for sure," said



Former Baylor head football coach Matt Rhule speaks to reporters outside his home Tuesday Jan. 7, 2020, in Waco, Texas.

Lapchick, who annually gives sports leagues grades on their efforts to diversify. "This is a serious cause for concern that we've now gone three years with the lowest numbers we've had in a long time." Just why those numbers are so low is open to debate, especially since the NFL has made efforts over

the past two decades to promote minority hires. The Rooney Rule not only mandated that teams interview coaches of color for coaching vacancies but was later updated so that the general manager job was included. And before last season, the rule was toughened so that teams couldn't skirt the re-

quirements with sham interviews. Still, the number of black head coaches stands at just three, down from a peak of eight. The situation in the GM's office is even more bleak, with just one black general manager. Not exactly the type of progress envisioned when former Steelers owner Dan

Rooney spearheaded the minority hiring rule nearly 20 years ago. The numbers are so bad on the GM side that Lapchick gave the league an F grade in that category for racial and gender hiring practices as part of an overall B grade.

"It's a serious problem," Lapchick said. "It's fair to say nobody is feeling pressured to diversify, especially at the club level."

If it's a problem, it's one that doesn't get a lot of attention outside of the annual head coach hiring season. That might be, Lapchick said, because players themselves have been relatively silent on the subject even while speaking out on social issues outside the league.

It's also true that as recently as the 2018 season there were eight black head coaches before five of them got fired.

NFL defenders point to that stat and argue that the latest hirings are indeed cyclical and the low current number of minority coaches is an aberration. NFL owners are so desperate to win, they say, that they would hire their worst enemy if they thought he had the best chance of getting them to a Super Bowl. □

Associated Press

Peterhansel wins Dakar 4th stage, Sainz stays in front

AL ULA, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Stéphane Peterhansel finally made his mark on the first Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia when he won the fourth stage on Wednesday. The most successful driver in Dakar history, the 13-time winner overcame a flat tire and wrong turn to dominate the second part of the 453-kilometer stage, as the rally left behind the Red Sea and moved east inland to Al Ula. Peterhansel held off defending champion Nasser Al-Attiyah by more than two minutes for his 77th stage win. "My (first-time) co-driver

(Paulo Fiuza) and I are starting to communicate more serenely and accurately, it's getting better," Peterhansel said. "This new Dakar is brilliant, it has all the ingredients: superb landscapes, tricky navigation, and enough difficulties to make a selection." Carlos Sainz drove conservatively to be seven minutes back in third, and became the first driver to retain the lead. He was three minutes ahead of Al-Attiyah, who was penalized three minutes before the stage for not letting a competitor pass on Tuesday despite warnings. "The last 100 kilometers

were the toughest sector I've ever faced in the Dakar. It was insane," Sainz said. "There were rocks all over the place and I could see the tracks of the bikes, it was devilish. At times like these, making it to the finish without running into trouble already feels like a win." Peterhansel was less than 12 minutes off the overall pace in third, and nobody else was within 23 minutes of Sainz's lead. Former Formula One champion Fernando Alonso conceded 26 minutes and dropped nearly three hours behind the leaders. Jose Ignacio Cornejo



Driver Carlos Sainz, of Spain, and co-driver Lucas Cruz, of Spain, race their Mini during stage four of the Dakar Rally between Neom and Al Ula, in Saudi Arabia, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020.

Associated Press

of Chile was declared the motorbike winner after Sam Sunderland, who came in 11 seconds ahead, was slapped with a five-minute penalty for speeding. The British rider dropped to eighth. Ignacio Cornejo worked

with Honda teammates Ricky Brabec and Kevin Benavides to stay on course but pushed ahead right at the stony end for his maiden stage win. "It took me 220 or 240 kilometres to catch Ricky," Ignacio Cornejo said. □

White House proposes guidelines for regulating the use of AI

By **MATT O'BRIEN**
AP Technology Writer

The Trump administration is proposing new rules to guide future federal regulation of artificial intelligence used in medicine, transportation and other industries. But the vagueness of the principles announced by the White House is unlikely to satisfy AI watchdogs who have warned of a lack of accountability as computer systems are deployed to take on human roles in high-risk social settings, such as mortgage lending or job recruitment. The White House said that in deciding regulatory action, U.S. agencies "must consider fairness, non-discrimination, openness, transparency, safety, and security." But federal agencies must also avoid setting up restrictions that "needlessly hamper AI innovation and growth," reads a memo being sent to U.S. agency chiefs from Russell Vought, acting director of the Office of Management and Budget. "Agencies must avoid a precautionary approach that holds AI systems to such an impossibly high standard that society cannot enjoy their benefits," the memo says. The rules won't affect how federal agencies such as



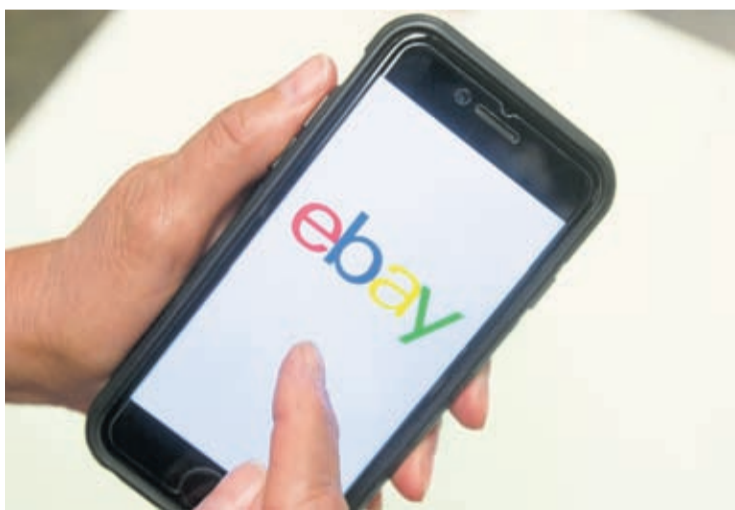
In this Nov. 29, 2019, file photo, a metal head made of motor parts symbolizes artificial intelligence, or AI, at the Essen Motor Show for tuning and motorsports in Essen, Germany.

law enforcement use facial recognition and other forms of AI. They are specifically limited to how federal agencies devise new AI regulations for the private sector. There's a 60-day public comment period before the rules take effect. "These principles are intentionally high-level," said Lynne Parker, U.S. deputy chief technology officer at the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy. "We purposely wanted to avoid top-down, one-size-fits-all, blanket regulations."

The White House said the proposals unveiled Tuesday are meant to promote private sector applications of AI that are safe and fair, while also pushing back against stricter regulations favored by some lawmakers and activists. Federal agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration and the Federal Aviation Administration will be bound to follow the new AI principles. That makes the rules "the first of their kind from any government," Michael Kratsios, the U.S. chief technology of-

ficer, said in a call with reporters Monday. Rapid advancements in AI technology have raised fresh concern as computers increasingly take on jobs such as diagnosing medical conditions, driving cars, recommending stock investments, judging credit risk and recognizing individual faces in video footage. It's often not clear how AI systems make their decisions, leading to questions of how far to trust them and when to keep humans in the loop. Terah Lyons of the nonprofit

Partnership on AI, which advocates for responsible AI and has backing from major tech firms and philanthropies, said the White House principles won't likely have sweeping or immediate effects. But she said she was encouraged that they detailed a U.S. approach centered on values such as trustworthiness and fairness. "The AI developer community may see that as a positive step in the right direction," said Lyons, who previously worked for the White House science and technology office during the Obama administration. "It's a little bit hard to see what the actual impact will be." What's missing, she added, are clear mechanisms for holding AI systems accountable. Another tech watchdog, New York University's AI Now Institute, said it welcomed new boundaries on AI applications but it "will take time to assess how effective these principles are in practice." Kratsios said he hopes the new principles can serve as a template for other democratic institutions such as the European Commission, which has put forward its own AI ethical guidelines, to preserve shared values without impeding the tech industry. □



In this July 11, 2019, file photo, an Ebay app is shown on a mobile phone in Miami.

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's competition watchdog said Wednesday that Facebook and eBay pledged to crack down on the trade in fake reviews at its request, removing hundreds of accounts, pages and groups

involved in the illicit business. The Competition and Markets Authority said the two U.S. tech companies agreed to step up efforts to detect, investigate and respond to fake and mislead-

Facebook, eBay crack down on fake reviews at UK request

ing reviews after it ordered them last year to address the problem. Facebook removed 188 pages and groups and disabled 24 accounts that were involved in the fake review trade, some on its Instagram platform. Some of the pages and groups were identified by the agency, others were found by Facebook. Some of the groups offered in online posts to write fake reviews for payment or in exchange for products. Others recruited people to write them on shopping and review sites. The regulator also said eBay permanently banned

53 users who were selling fake review services on the auction site and temporarily suspended another 176 users. Facebook agreed to beef up its systems to detect and remove fake review material while eBay refined its existing filters to better identify and block listings for online review services, the CMA said. "Fake reviews are really damaging to shoppers and businesses alike," the regulator's chief executive, Andrea Coscelli, said in a statement. "Millions of people base their shopping decisions on reviews,

and if these are misleading or untrue, then shoppers could end up being misled into buying something that isn't right for them - leaving businesses who play by the rules missing out." eBay said it has "zero tolerance for fake or misleading reviews and will continue to take action against any seller that breaches our user polices." Facebook said it has "invested heavily" to stop people offering or trading fake review services on its platforms, but "we know there is more work to do and are working with the CMA to address this issue." □

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Rooi Santo # 25m
4Bed/4Bath home with
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outdoor kitchen

\$575.000.00

Oceania # 213
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Condo.

\$310.000.00

Caya Ritmo # 35
4 Bedr 2 Story Home
Eagle Beach area

\$650.000.00

Tamarijn # 59
4Bedr home w/ sweeping
island views, open air
courtyard & lap pool

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Millennial Money: How to take charge of your credit in 2020

By **AMRITA JAYAKUMAR**
Associated Press

By now, you've encountered the world of credit, whether it was renting your first apartment or figuring out how to pay for a kitchen remodel.

Whatever your financial goals this year, your credit is likely to play a role in achieving them. Take a fresh approach to your credit by brushing up on the basics: What really matters for your credit score? What's the difference between a credit score and credit report? Once you've revisited the basics, sit back and enjoy the perks of good credit: a shot at rewards credit cards, lower mortgage or car loan rates and more.

Here's your crash course on credit, and tips to make your score shine.

HOW MANY CREDIT SCORES DO I HAVE?

The short answer: Many. There are two major credit-scoring companies: FICO and VantageScore. "Both take into account the same factors, they just have a different way of weighting them and creating a score," says Tasha Bishop, director of digital innovation and development at Apprisen, a nonprofit credit counseling agency in Columbus, Ohio.

FICO and VantageScore make different versions of scores that lenders, employers and landlords use to size up your credit hab-



This June 10, 2015, file photo shows a chip credit card in Philadelphia.

its. The phrase "your FICO score" refers to FICO 8, the version typically used in lending decisions. If you've used a free credit score service or seen a free score through your bank, it's likely the VantageScore 3.0. Both scores range between 300 and 850.

Lenders decide which version of your score to use. "If you go to a car dealership, they might pull a score that's different from when you apply for a mortgage or when you sign up for a cellphone," says Daniel Stous, a certified financial planner at Flagstone Financial Management in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Mortgage lenders generally consider older versions

of your FICO score, while auto lenders look at an auto-specific FICO score that ranges from 250 to 900. When you're tracking your score, look at the same version each time — otherwise, you're comparing apples and oranges.

WHAT REALLY MATTERS FOR YOUR SCORE?

Following two rules puts you on the path to a good score: Pay bills on time and use less than 30% of your credit card limits — the lower, the better.

"Lenders want to know that you make your payments and make them on time," Bishop says. This has the biggest impact on your scores.

Next, look at how much

you charge on credit cards each month relative to your credit limits. This factor, known as your credit utilization ratio, "compares how much of your credit you have available compared to how much credit you are using," Bishop says. Other factors, such as how long you've had credit, the mix of installment loans and credit cards you have and how recently you applied for credit matter much less in your scores.

WHAT DOESN'T AFFECT MY SCORE?

Knowing what doesn't affect your score will spare you from needless worry. For example, checking your own credit score never hurts it, whether you do it

once a day or once a year. Stous says people often think utility payments help their scores, but with most scores, they don't. These payments can only hurt them if you are over 30 days late on a payment. Then, the bill may be charged off or sent to a collector, who can report it to the credit bureaus.

Another common misconception — especially among millennials — is that having many credit cards is bad for your score, Stous says. As long as you keep your credit utilization low and space out applications, having a number of cards isn't bad, he says.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CREDIT SCORE AND A CREDIT REPORT?

"The credit report is the detailed history of how you borrowed money," Bishop says. You have three: one each from Experian, Equifax and TransUnion, the major credit bureaus. Your credit reports contain loan and credit card payment records, personal data to identify you, addresses and information from public records such as bankruptcies and foreclosures. While it may seem strange, credit reports don't include your credit score.

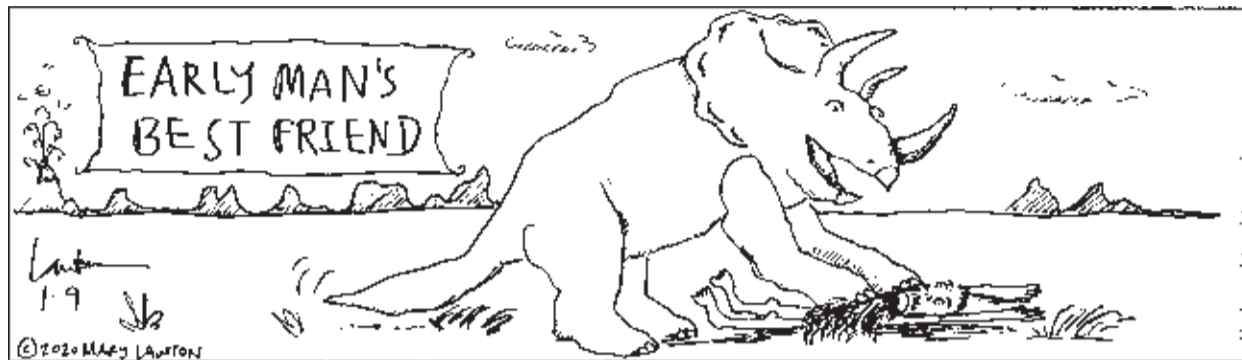
FICO and VantageScore use data from your reports to calculate scores. Errors on your reports can hurt your scores, so disputing them with the bureaus is a smart move. □

Associated Press

Mutts



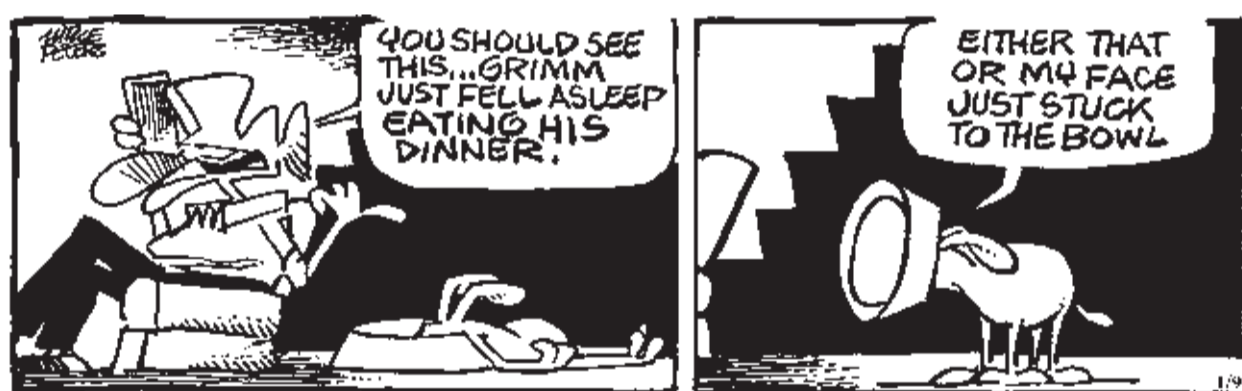
6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

		6		4	9			
1			7		6			
5	8							
	4		2	5		9		7
8				6				
							1	2
		3		4				5
	6	5		8				

Difficulty Level ★★★

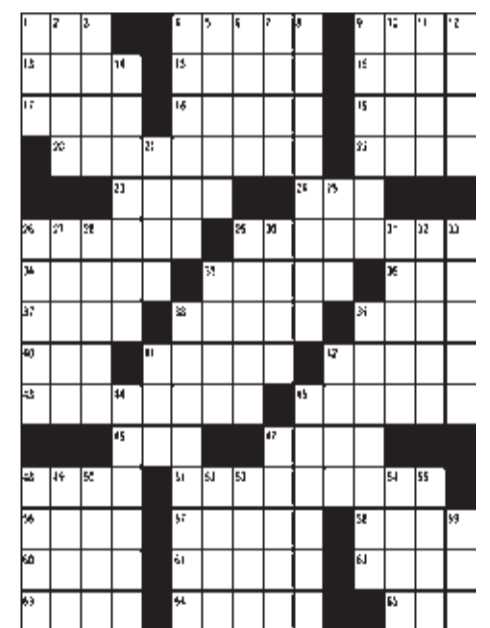
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

5	2	6	8	9	3	1	7	4
9	8	1	7	4	2	3	5	6
3	7	4	1	5	6	9	8	2
7	4	8	9	2	1	6	3	5
6	3	2	5	7	8	4	1	9
1	9	5	6	3	4	7	2	8
2	5	3	4	1	9	8	6	7
4	6	7	3	8	5	2	9	1
8	1	9	2	6	7	5	4	3

- ACROSS**
- Varied women
 - abcr
 - Egyptian dam
 - Dermatosis
 - symptom
 - highway
 - Black card
 - Guy
 - Yarn
 - Gran
 - Vague hazy
 - Esteemed
 - CDE & others
 - up with tolerates
 - Blood analysis
 - one of parsley
 - The Merry Widow
 - for one
 - Gives up
 - Like a lie
 - Or one's independent
 - Strong desire
 - Cause of measles
 - one of our or Whitman
 - clonazepam
 - odor
 - Bank vaults
 - uses an emery board
 - Slowly slow
 - Comfortably warm
 - Widespread
 - Doc's home
 - Healthy
 - Foodiness
 - Once a time
 - cut; say without thinking
 - Dinner course
 - Gave, but expected back
 - Sir
 - Texas
 - unw. in Lubbock
 - Without changes
 - Actor Buddy
 - poor; stall for
 - ky

- DOWN**
- Actor on 'The A-Team'
 - Laugh loudly
 - Garage
 - weekend event
 - Widow's
 - Eye glasses for short
 - Be patient
 - Tool with an arched blade
 - Unnecessary
 - Drink
 - Discussion
 - Classic board game
 - His and
 - matching items for Dad & Mom
 - Notwithstanding
 - Winky-faced dogs
 - Diamonds
 - Forever 21
 - Crew, team
 - Handbag
 - Correct
 - Rowed
 - Adder's sign
 - Impediments
 - Nest, rose
 - Nervous
 - Straight
 - Costly



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

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Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

SHH	SPRIG	ALLS
WHOA	ALICE	COOL
HOOD	BASKET	CASE
YET	MONEY	RENEW
ELATE	MAP	
MINORS	NECTAR	
ADAGE	TWEAK	NET
LINE	DROWN	STAR
TON	FRONT	SHIPE
MYRIAD	MOUSSE	
AGB	LIMBO	
SLOTH	SPINE	CSI
CAPITULATE	RIO	
OVEN	PAPER	HALS
TANG	SPARS	OLD

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Presidential unit available: 1317 week 1, 2 bedroom, 2 bath, full kitchen, dining and living room, beautiful pool and fitness center \$18,000
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Halley Time Travel

For Rent 2020

Marriott Ocean Club

1 BR Ocean View Platinum
Price : \$ 3 K each
Date : 03/22/20 to 03/29/20 (3)
03/20/20 to 02/27/20 (2)
02/21/20 to 02/28/20 (4)

Marriott Surf Club

For Rent / For sale \$3500
\$18 K
2 BR Ocean Side Platinum
date: 6 march to 13 march 2020

For Rent

Divi Links Golf

2 BR WK 3 sleep 8 \$2 K
01/18/20 to 01/25/20
Studio wk 7 sleep 4 \$1500
02/15/20 to 02/22/20

La Cabana Beach and Casino

1 BR wk 3 \$1800
01/18/20 to 01/25/20

Marriott Ocean Club

Platinum
1 BR Ocean View \$9 K
1 BR Ocean Front \$ 20 K
2 BR Ocean View \$ 16,5 K
2 BR Ocean Front \$26 K

Marriott Surf Club

Platinum
2 BR Ocean View \$15,5 K
2 BR Ocean Side \$16,5 K
2 BR Ocean Front \$26 K
3 BR Ocean View \$ 28 K
Marriott Surf Club
Platinum Plus
2 BR WK 52 Ocean Side \$54 K
2 BR WK 52 Ocean Front \$85 K
2 BR WK 52 Garden View \$45 K
2 BR WK 51 /52 Ocean Front \$ 160 K both
2 BR WK 7 Ocean View \$45 K

Aruba Divi Phoenix

2 BR Lock off wk 51/52
building 7 on the 5th floor
27 weeks remain \$30 K each
or \$ 58 K both all in
2 BR PH wk 1
building 7 on the 5 th floor
28 weeks remain \$45 K

Aruba Divi Phoenix

1 BR WK 2
building 8 ground floor
32 weeks remain \$16 K
1 BR WK 8
building 6 on the 4th floor
27 weeks remain \$15 K
1 BR PH wk 8/9 \$12,5 K each
14th floor 30/28 weeks remain

Eagle Resort

3 BR wk 51/52 \$ 55K both
1 BR wk 51/52 \$ 25K both
1 BR wk 5,6,7,8 \$ 7,5 K each
1 BR wk 7 \$7K

Divi Links Golf

Studio wk 2 \$7,5 K
Eagle 3 with 23 weeks remain
1 BR wk 3 \$8,5 K
eagle 3 with 23 weeks remain
1 BR WK 8/9 \$ 9,5 K each
Eagle 9 with 27 /19 weeks remain

Divi Links

2 BR wk 3 \$22 K
Eagle 8 with 25 weeks remain
1 BR wk 4 \$8 K
Birdie 1 with 20 weeks remain

Divi Village

Studio wk 1 \$7,5 K
building C with 24 weeks remain
Studio wk 6 \$7,5 K
building F 22 weeks remain

Dutch Village

1 BR wk 52 \$7,5K

Divi Links Golf

studio wk 1 \$7,5 K
building 4 28 weeks remain
Studio wk 5, 7 and 8 \$8 K each
birdie 4 with 28/27/29 weeks remain

Divi Village

1 BR WK 1 \$8,5 K
Studio WK 1 \$7,5 K
building D & F
25 weeks remain on each

Paradise Beach Villas

1 BR wk 1 and 2 \$12,5K each
2nd floor pool/ocean view

La Cabana Beach and Casino

1 BR WK 52 \$9 K
4th floor Friday check in
1 BR wk 51/52 \$17 K both
4th floor Friday check in
1 BR WK 52 \$11 K
3rd floor Sunday check in

Caribbean Pam Village

1 BR wk 52 \$7 K
1 BR wk 2 \$6 K
1 BR /2 BR WK 3 \$ 6 K
1 BR WK 3/4 \$6 K each

House in Ponton

5 min from every where
4 BR 3 Bath Pool \$370 K

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Big study finds no strong sign linking baby powder & cancer

By **LINDSEY TANNER**

U.S. government-led research found no strong evidence linking baby powder with ovarian cancer in the largest analysis to look at the question.

The findings were called "overall reassuring" in an editorial published Tuesday with the study in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The analysis involving 250,000 women isn't definitive but more conclusive research probably isn't feasible because a dwindling number of women use powder for personal hygiene, the editorial said. "This represents the best data we have on the topic," said the study's lead author Katie O'Brien, a senior scientist at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

Health concerns about talcum powders have prompted thousands of U.S. lawsuits by women who claim asbestos in the powder caused their cancer. Talc is a mineral similar in structure to asbestos, which is known to cause cancer, and they are sometimes obtained from the same mines. The cosmetics industry in 1976 agreed to



In this April 19, 2010, file photo, baby powder is squeezed from its bottle in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

make sure its talc products do not contain detectable amounts of asbestos. Smaller studies investigating a possible link between talcum powder and cancer have had conflicting results, though most found no connection.

The new analysis pooled results from four long-running studies involving 250,000 U.S. women, who were asked periodically about

their use of powder in the genital area. About 40% said they did. During 11 years of follow-up, 2,168 women developed ovarian cancer, with roughly similar numbers in those who used powders and those who didn't. These kinds of observational studies cannot determine cause and effect, and O'Brien said a more rigorous study isn't likely to be done. That would require

randomly assigning a large group of women to use talc powders over many years, and comparing the results with those who didn't use powders.

The researchers found hints of a potentially small increased risk for cancer for women who had never had a hysterectomy or fallopian tube-tying surgery. The American Cancer Society's Susan Gapstur said that fits with one theory for how genital use of talc might be risky: With a pathway not blocked by surgery, powder particles could potentially travel into the fallopian tubes and ovaries and cause irritation, inflammation and DNA damage that could lead to cancer.

Those results were weak and are murky at best. Still, O'Brien said they make the overall findings "very ambiguous."

The U.S. lawsuits have targeted leading baby powder maker Johnson & Johnson. Although several juries have reached multimillion-dollar verdicts against the company, they have been overturned or are being appealed. J&J says its powder is routinely tested to ensure

there's no asbestos.

On Monday, an unusual mid-trial settlement was announced in an Oakland, California, case involving a woman who claimed asbestos in the powder caused her mesothelioma, a cancer that can affect the lungs and other organs. J&J spokeswoman Kimberly Montagnino declined to disclose terms or reasons for the agreement but said it "in no way changes our overall position that our talc is safe, is asbestos-free and does not cause cancer."

J&J did recall a batch of baby powder in October after U.S. government testing found trace amounts of asbestos in a single bottle. The company paid for more testing by outside labs, which it said found no asbestos in the implicated baby powder bottle and other samples.

Last week, New Mexico sued the company claiming it has marketed asbestos-containing baby powder and other talc powders for decades, and has targeted black and Hispanic women and children with "false messages" about safety. J&J denies the claims. □



In this May 28, 2019, file photo, a man on a scooter passes a parked scooter along the Mission Beach boardwalk in San Diego.

Associated Press

Electric scooter injuries surge along with their popularity

By **LINDSEY TANNER**

Electric scooter injuries have surged along with their popularity in the United States, nearly tripling over four years, researchers said in a study published Wednesday.

Nearly 40,000 broken bones, head injuries, cuts and bruises resulting from scooter accidents were treated in U.S. emergency rooms from 2014 through 2018, the research showed. The scooter injury rate among the general U.S. population climbed from 6 per 100,000 to 19 per 100,000. Most occurred in riders aged 18 to 34, and most injured riders weren't hospitalized.

For the study published in JAMA Surgery, researchers

at the University of California, San Francisco, analyzed U.S. government data on nonfatal injuries treated in emergency rooms.

"Improved rider safety measures and regulation" are clearly needed, the researchers said.

Media reports have linked the stand-up electric scooters with more than a dozen U.S. deaths within the past few years.

The trend follows the emergence of rental companies in cities around the world that let customers rent

scooters through smartphone apps and drop them off anywhere in the same city. Some cities have adopted nighttime bans and other restrictions amid rising injuries and complaints about scooters traveling or parked on sidewalks.

"Scooters promote active commuting," could help spur wider public transit use and could lead to less traffic congestion, said lead author Dr. Benjamin Breyer. "We hope to raise awareness that riders should wear helmets and ride safely." □

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Celebs donate millions to help Australia wildfire efforts

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr.
LOS ANGELES (AP) — Elton John and Chris Hemsworth are among the celebrities donating big bucks for relief efforts as wildfires engulf Australia.

Hemsworth, the Australian actor who plays Thor in the Marvel movie franchise, took to social media Monday to share that he will donate \$1 million and asked his millions of followers to show support as well. He said that "every penny counts."

So far, the wildfires have scorched an area twice the size of the U.S. state of Maryland. The blazes have killed 25 people and destroyed 2,000 homes. The fires, fueled by drought and the country's hottest and driest year on record, have been raging since September, months earlier than is typical for Australia's annual wildfire season.

John announced during his Farewell Yellow Brick Road concert in Sydney, Australia, that he will also donate



In a Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020 file photo, Elton John arrives at the 77th annual Golden Globe Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Associated Press

\$1 million. The singer said he wanted to bring attention to the devastation that wildfires have caused, saying it has reached a "biblical scale."

Hemsworth and John join a growing list of celebrities who have pledged to donate toward relief efforts, including Nicole Kidman, Pink and Keith Urban.

"I am totally devastated watching what is happening in Australia right now with the horrific bushfires," Pink wrote in a recent social media post. "I am pledging

a donation of \$500,000 directly to the local fire services that are battling so hard on the frontlines. My heart goes out to our friends and family in Oz."

Metallica announced a donation on Tuesday night of \$750,000 to a firefighting agency and emergency services agency in Victoria. An emotional Rose Byrne, who is Australian, spoke about the crisis and the relief efforts on Tuesday night at the New York premiere of her movie "Like a Boss."

"Really what people need is just donations because it's all volunteer based, the firefighters and all the rural services and the wildlife services trying to rescue the animals," she told The Associated Press. She added: "It's devastating. It's such a beautiful country. There's always drought but this is the hottest year on record and they need rain but a lot of rain, not just a little bit which is what's happening now. □"

'Modern Family' to bid farewell in April series finale

By BETH HARRIS
PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — "Modern Family" will air its finale after 11 seasons on April 8, and there are no spin-offs in the works involving its large cast.

Eric Stonestreet jokingly pitched one featuring Cam and Mitch, the gay couple played by him and Jesse Tyler Ferguson, after executive producer Steven Levitan told a TV critics meeting on Wednesday that nothing is planned.

The Pritchett-Dunphy-Tucker clan isn't done traveling, though. They visit Paris in an episode airing Feb. 12, continuing their tradition of trips to such places as Australia, Hawaii, Las Vegas, New York and Wyoming.

"I was able to do a lot of shopping, so it was perfect," said Sofia Vergara, who became a breakout star when the series began in 2009.

The show starring Ed O'Neill was an immediate hit and holds the record with "Frasier" of five straight Emmy



This image released by ABC shows the cast of the ABC sitcom "Modern Family".

Associated Press

Awards as television's best comedy.

Levitan and co-creator Christopher Lloyd knew from the start the show would include a gay couple who adopts a baby.

"When we locked it in, I re-

member saying to Chris, 'Well, there goes Middle America,'" said Levitan, whose concern proved to be unfounded. "We got zero blowback. They were embraced because here was this couple, their first

priority was their baby and raising it and doing it right, and people said it was hard to argue with that." Stonestreet added: "We were able to make all the same mistakes raising a child that everyone else

did."

The younger cast members, including Rico Rodriguez, Ariel Winter and Nolan Gould, grew up on the show. Sarah Hyland, who was 18 when "Modern Family" began, mentioned the "keyboard trolls" who criticized the changing appearances of her and Winter over the years.

"Between the two of us, we have gone and tackled them with all of our spite and wit," Hyland said. Rodriguez credited O'Neill, who was sick Wednesday, for taking him under his wing as a 10-year-old newcomer.

"Some of the jokes would just fly right over my head," Rodriguez said. "He was always there for me."

Before the finale, ABC is presenting a fan-curated tribute on March 11. The network will kick off the night in prime time with the series' very first episode, followed by favorite episodes that fans get to vote on next month. □

Streaming TV programming for kids embraces iconic brands

By **MARK KENNEDY**

NEW YORK (AP) — New technology. Same furry faces.

When Apple was thinking about what kind of children's TV programming it wanted on its new streaming service, it doubled down on two multi-generational crowd-pleasers — Snoopy and "Sesame Street."

Apple TV Plus has carved out prominent roles for

Charlie Brown's floppy-eared beagle and for puppets from the famed Sesame Workshop in its slate of kid and family friendly programs.

"Both Snoopy and Sesame Workshop are crown jewels of the last decades in what family entertainment looks like. There's a reason that we went proactively to those two entities," said Zack Van Amburg, who is Apple's head of worldwide



This image released by Apple shows the character Snoopy in a scene from an animated short "Snoopy in Space."

Associated Press

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SAT-SUN 1:15 | 3:50 | 6:25 | 9:00

KRISTEN STEWART | VINCENT CASSEL

UNDERWATER

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PH MON-THU 6:05 | 8:20

FRI 6:05 | 8:20 | 10:35

SAT 3:50 | 6:05 | 8:20 | 10:35

SUN 3:50 | 6:05 | 8:20 | 8:10

PBP MON-FRI 5:15 | 7:25 | 9:35

SAT-SUN 12:55 | 3:05 | 5:15 | 7:25 | 9:35

ROSE BYRNE | TIFFANY HADDISH

Like a Boss

PH MON-THU 6:05 | 8:10

FRI 6:05 | 8:10 | 10:15

SAT 1:55 | 4:00 | 6:05 | 8:10 | 10:15

SUN 1:55 | 4:00 | 6:05 | 8:10

PBP MON-FRI 5:20 | 7:20 | 9:20

SAT-SUN 1:20 | 3:20 | 5:20 | 7:20 | 9:20

TARA WESTWOOD | JUNKO BAILEY

THE GRUDGE

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PBP MON-SUN 7:20 | 9:30

PAUL WALTER HAUSER | SAM ROCKWELL

RICHARD JEWELL

1 GOLDEN GLOBE® NOMINATION

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PH MON-SUN 9:05

DWAYNE JOHNSON | JACK BLACK

JUMANJI

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PH MON-FRI 5:50 | 8:40

SAT-SUN 3:05 | 5:50 | 8:40

PBP MON-FRI 4:00 | 6:40 | 9:20

SAT-SUN 1:20 | 4:00 | 6:40 | 9:20

MON-THU 5:40 | 8:20

FRI 5:40 | 8:20 | 11:00

SAT 3:00 | 5:40 | 8:20

SUN 3:00 | 5:40 | 8:20

WILL SMITH | TOM HOLLAND

SPIES DISGUISE

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PH MON-FRI 4:35 | 6:50

SAT-SUN 2:20 | 4:35 | 6:50

PBP MON-FRI 4:20 | 6:40 | 9:00

SAT-SUN 2:00 | 4:20 | 6:40 | 9:00

KRISTEN BELL | IDINA MENZEL

Disney FROZEN II

2 GOLDEN GLOBE® NOMINATIONS

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PBP MON-FRI 5:00

SAT-SUN 2:40 | 5:00

SACIIRSE RONAN | EMMA WATSON

LITTLE WOMEN

2 GOLDEN GLOBE® NOMINATIONS

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PH MON-FRI 6:05 | 9:00

SAT-SUN 3:10 | 6:05 | 9:00

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video alongside Jamie Eilicht.

The decision to use existing children's icons as the bedrock for the fledgling platform is one shared by several other streaming services, often with one eye on looming Netflix, the world's largest streamer with an arsenal of titles attracting kids and families.

The services are competing for kids' eyeballs not only from each other but also from shows on YouTube and traditional broadcast channels. Often the safest way forward is piggybacking on established titles that parents already know from their childhood and leaning into the nostalgia.

Amazon Prime Video has rebooted "Clifford the Big Red Dog" and has original shows featuring Kung-Fu Panda, Pete the Cat, and Rocky and Bullwinkle. CBS All Access has series built on the classic book "Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs" and the classic 'toon "Danger Mouse."

Disney Plus is offering shorts starring Forky from "Toy Story 4" and a reboot of the Hilary Duff-led "Lizzie McGuire," another show built around Phineas & Ferb, plus a new series based on Marvel Comics' "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier." And, yes, it, too, has Muppets — the unscripted series "Muppets Now."

Netflix has embraced shows built around Captain Underpants, "Lost in Space," the book "Green

Eggs and Ham," the comic book "Raising Dion" and even a youth-orientated "Fast and Furious" series.

"Our intention is to offer a lot of choice. When we think about kids or we think about a family audience, one of the things we think about is there's no two kids that are the same and there are no two families that are the same," said Melissa Cobb, Netflix's vice president of kids and family.

Brian Wright, vice president of original series at Netflix, said its creators are hoping to craft content that allows a family to have a shared experience and a shared conversation — wherever that family is.

"We really want to be in the space of building really appealing worlds that have something for everybody," he said. "One thing that we talk a lot about is reflecting the world back at itself. We want to break down the barriers of who gets to be seen and represented."

Apple TV Plus subscribers may not get as many shows as Netflix but executives are building a carefully curated list, including a dozen 8-minute "Snoopy in Space" animated shorts, as well as the brand new upcoming series "The Snoopy Show," with each installment featuring three seven-minute cartoons starring the Peanuts crew.

They'll also get two series from Sesame: the live-action preschool-aimed

"Helpsters," which mixes human actors and puppets, including Cody, a new puppet that loves computer coding. And there's "Ghostwriter," a live-action fantasy series that re-imagines the Sesame Workshop's 1992 series. The streamer will also have the original animated special "Here We Are" based on lauded author Oliver Jeffers' book, the animated series "Wolfboy and the Everything Factory," the live-action animated hybrid "Lovely Little Farm" and a pair of animated series based on the children's books "Doug Unplugged" (rebranded for TV "Doug Unplugs") and "Zen Shorts" (called "Stillwater" for TV).

"When you look at the breadth of programming, I think you'll see a mix of established book properties, reboots of television shows, but also new properties from diverse creators," said Tara Sorensen, Apple's head of children's programming. "Apple as a whole believes in great storytelling and so we want to make sure we represent that across our slate."

Van Amburg and Sorensen said that what makes Apple TV Plus distinctive from some of the others is a commitment to education and imparting lessons. "We want to make sure parents feel good about watching these programs together as a family but also putting their kids in front of them solo," said Sorensen. □

Acclaimed Conceptual artist John Baldessari dies at 88

By JOHN ROGERS

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — John Baldessari, who pioneered a new genre of art in the 1970s and in the process helped elevate Los Angeles' status in the art world from that of back-water berg to a center of the Conceptual movement, has died at age 88.

Baldessari died Thursday at his home in Los Angeles, the artist's representatives at New York's Marian Goodman Gallery confirmed Monday.

"It is with immense sadness that I write to let you know of the death of the intelligent, loving and incomparable John Baldessari," Goodman said in a statement. "The loss to his family, his fellow artists, his studio staff, friends and devoted former students is beyond measure."

A giant in the world of art both literally and figuratively — he stood 6-feet-7-inches tall — the bearded, shaggy-haired Baldessari produced thousands of works, many of which have been exhibited all over the world and are in the collections of major museums from Los Angeles to New York.

He also influenced dozens of other artists, both with his work and as a teacher at the prestigious California Institute of the Arts and the University of California, Los Angeles.

"His legendary class in Post-Studio Art bestowed on those of us with enough brains to notice a feeling of unbelievable luck of being in exactly the right place at the right time for the new freedoms in art," fellow artist David Salle wrote in the 2013 introduction to a lengthy interview he conducted with Baldessari, his CalArts professor in the early 1970s.

Student met teacher at a time not long after Baldessari, having grown frustrated with his own abstract expressionist paintings, loaded them into 10 boxes, took them to a San Diego funeral home and burned them.

Bored with an art move-



In this Thursday, Sept. 17, 2015, file photo, artist John Baldessari poses at The Broad museum's opening and inaugural dinner in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

ment he believed had grown old and stale, Baldessari set out to create something new, creating multimedia works that among other things merged photographs with painting, sometimes included pieces of recognizable objects or body parts but in unimaginable ways and often contained perfectly formed block letters placed as captions on the paintings.

It was a style that prompted Los Angeles Times arts critic Christopher Knight to declare Baldessari "arguably America's most influential Conceptual artist."

Over the course of his career, which continued into his 80s, Baldessari worked in such forms as prints, sculpture, text-based art, paintings and photographs, often mixing two or more of them together.

Some of his most well known works included "God Nose," which depicted a nose in the sky with those two words under it; "The Intersection Series: Person and Dog/High Rise Building," a mixture of photography and acrylic that included a dog, a building, a car and other images; and "Double Bill ... And

Matisse," which combined inkjet print on canvas with acrylic and oil paint to display a pair of walking legs and the words, "Just Matisse."

Those works and others often struck viewers as both brilliantly constructed and at the same time whimsical, although Baldessari insisted he was never trying to be funny. Instead he compared himself to a mystery writer, providing clues to the reader, or in this case the viewer, and letting them figure it out.

"I go back and forth between wanting to be abundantly simple and mad-deningly complex," he told Salle during that 2013 interview. "I always compare what I do to the work of a mystery writer— like, you don't want to know the end of the book right away."

Although he may not have deliberately intended his work to be humorous, Salle told The Associated Press on Monday, humor, irony and humanity were so imbued in Baldessari's personality that they became "almost like the delivery system of his work."

"And then later on, at some point he added to

that visual glamour, which was very much apart from other Conceptual artists who were much more restrained," Salle added. "That was a winning combination that made his work accessible and pleasurable and complex and dense all at the same time."

John Anthony Baldessari was born on June 17, 1931, in National City, California, a small town on both the edge of San Diego and the Mexican city of Tijuana. His father, a salvage dealer, was from Austria and his mother from Denmark.

Showing artistic talent from an early age, he was often chosen by teachers to create murals or other art projects. After high school, he decided to study art at San Diego State University despite his father's concerns that it could be something he'd struggle at to earn a living.

After earning a master's degree, he went on to teach art at his alma mater, at local public schools and, for one summer, at a camp for teenage juvenile delinquents. He would joke in later years that it was likely his imposing size as much as his artistic skills that earned him that latter job.

He was also painting and showing his work, although by the late 1960s he'd begun to grow bored with what he and others were producing.

Before torching his paintings in 1970, he created a magazine cover that depicted a copy of a painting with the words, "This is not to be looked at" painted underneath the work as a caption.

After incinerating his own work, he began teaching at CalArts, where his students included Salle, Mike Kelley, Barbara Bloom and other future prominent artists.

Later he taught for several years at UCLA.

Over the years, he collected numerous honors, including the National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama.

His works are in the collections of New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, New York's Whitney Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and in Los Angeles' The Broad, the Museum of Contemporary Art and the County Museum of Art.

"He's someone who's had over 377 solo exhibitions, been part of more than 1,500 group exhibitions, who has produced over 4,000 works of art," former MOCA director Philippe Vergne said when the museum honored him in 2015. As the accolades accumulated over the years, the soft-spoken artist remained humble, even mocking his work during a 2018 appearance on "The Simpsons," in which he discusses art with Marge.

"I still have that vestigial idea that all these other people are artists. I'm an artist wannabe," he told Salle in 2013.

When Salle told him he'd created a movement that altered art history, he laughed.

"I thought I was going to teach high school, maybe have a family, and do art on the weekends," he replied.

Survivors include Baldessari's daughter, Annamarie, and son, Tony. □

South Africa's black farmers fight to enter marijuana market

HENNOPS, South Africa (AP)

— Stacks of bright green cannabis plants, freshly harvested from nearby hot-houses, are expertly sorted on a lab table by workers wearing hygienic gloves and caps who snip the leaves and buds and put them in bins for further processing.

Druid's Garden in Hennops, about 20 miles north of Johannesburg, is a licensed farm which conducts research, legally produces cannabis and other traditional medicinal products for sale in South Africa and international markets.

The farm's founder, Cian McClelland, said one of his aims is to help smaller-scale, black farmers enter South Africa's potentially lucrative marijuana market.

"One of the most important aspects of this industry is for us to find ways to uplift small farmers, particularly black rural farmers," said McClelland. "We would like to play an active role around the country, in partnership with the Heritage Trust, to help ... provide access to these markets."

McClelland knows that rural black farmers, who have grown marijuana traditionally but illegally, are now fighting to benefit from the country's relaxation of cannabis laws.

Following the Constitutional Court's decision in 2018 to decriminalize the personal use and cultivation of cannabis, South Africa's cannabis industry could be worth more than \$23 billion by 2023, according to a recent report by data col-



In this photo taken Thursday, Dec. 12, 2019 cannabis plants are harvested in a hothouse at Hennops, near Johannesburg, South Africa.

Associated Press

lection agency Prohibition Partners.

However, there are concerns on the ground that black farmers who have been working for decades in what has been an illegal industry may miss out on the potential boom.

Many smaller growers cannot afford to get the licenses needed to grow marijuana for medicinal and research purposes.

The stringent requirements include getting police clearances, registering a specified plot size, erecting high-tech security fencing, getting irrigation systems and setting up agreements with overseas buyers, among others. The cost of establishing a legal marijuana farm is estimated to be \$200,000 to \$350,000,

according to a South African agricultural publication, Landbouweekblad.

The new marijuana industry could soon be controlled by big pharmaceutical companies, cutting out long-time growers, say agricultural experts.

Some successful black farmers like Itumeleng Tau are working to train emerging farmers to grow and process cannabis up to the standards required to obtain medicinal permits.

"If an ordinary farmer in the homelands (rural areas) is being required to have two hectares (5 acres) of land or one hectare (2.5 acres), fully fenced, while they have been farming when it was un-fenced and nobody was stealing it, it is quite impractical," said Tau. Moleboheng Semela, a cannabis activist and general secretary of the Cannabis Development Council, is among those fighting to get licenses for those who had previously grown and sold cannabis illegally. Her organization helps emerging farmers to obtain permits to cultivate cannabis and produce medicinal products.

"We have those communities that have been involved in the cannabis industry before the court ruling, but we have seen that our government is

more focused on the (producers of) pharmaceuticals," said Semela.

South Africa's cannabis industry is growing so quickly that marijuana conventions are popping up across the country.

A recent cannabis expo held in Johannesburg's posh Sandton Convention Center attracted hundreds of marijuana activists, farmers, growers and exhibitors from across the world. The expo grew from 58 exhibitor stands last year to more than 200 stands this year, according to expo director Silas Howard.

"It just goes to show how big and how fast this industry has grown," said Howard. South African president Cyril Ramaphosa recently touted the country's can-

nabis industry as an important sector in the country's fight against unemployment.

"We note that the cultivation of cannabis ... can play an important role in uplifting the poorest regions in the country," Ramaphosa told a community meeting in the rural town of Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape province in September last year. The province is among the areas in South Africa where cannabis has been grown by many subsistence farmers for generations, despite laws against it. The Eastern Cape's provincial government last year sent a delegation to Canada to research cannabis cultivation and product development.

However South African law enforcement agencies remain resolute in arresting those producing without permits. In November, police arrested three people for operating a hydroponic lab in Brits, outside the capital Pretoria, confiscating more than \$200,000 worth of cannabis.

"The investigation aims to clamp down on the unlawful mushrooming of cannabis dispensaries around the country," said police spokesman Captain Tlangelani Rikhotso.

At Druid's Garden, Cian McClelland, said the bar does not necessarily have to be so high for new entrants.

"Going for a full pharmaceutical license is very expensive and out of reach of most rural people," he said. □



In this photo taken Thursday, Dec. 12, 2019, small-scale farmer Itumeleng Tau stands among his cannabis plants in a hothouse in Krugersdorp, South Africa.

Associated Press



In this photo taken Thursday, Dec. 12, 2019 cannabis plants are processed in a laboratory at Hennops, near Johannesburg, South Africa.

Associated Press